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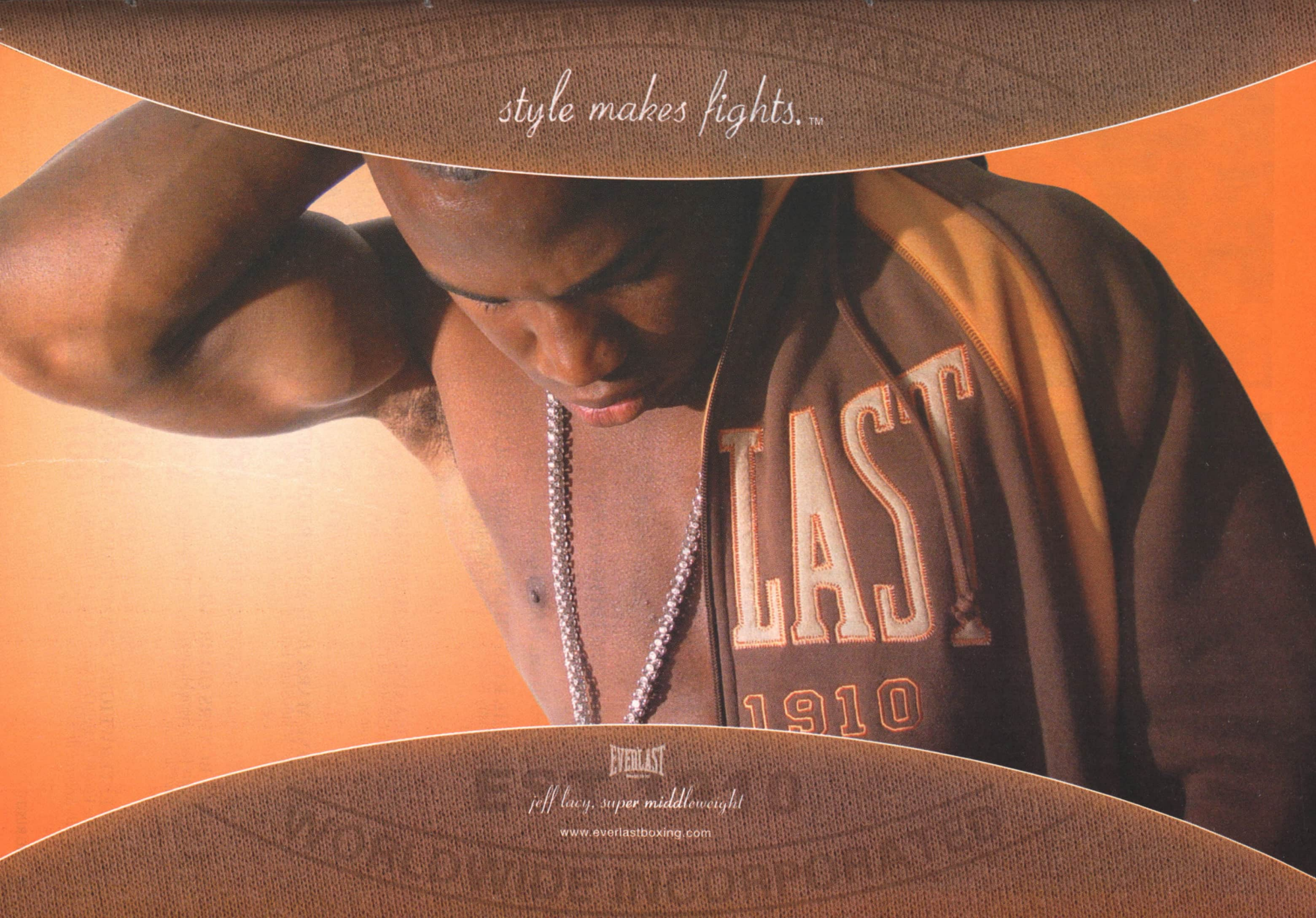
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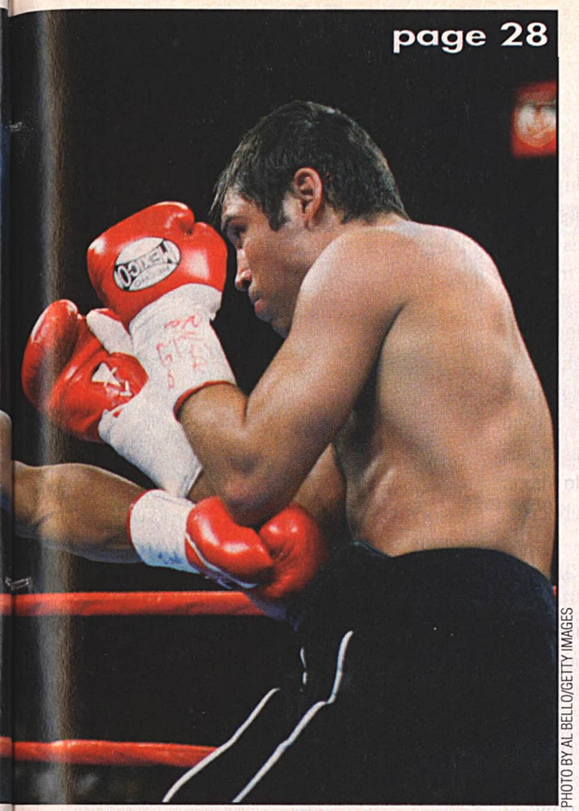

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

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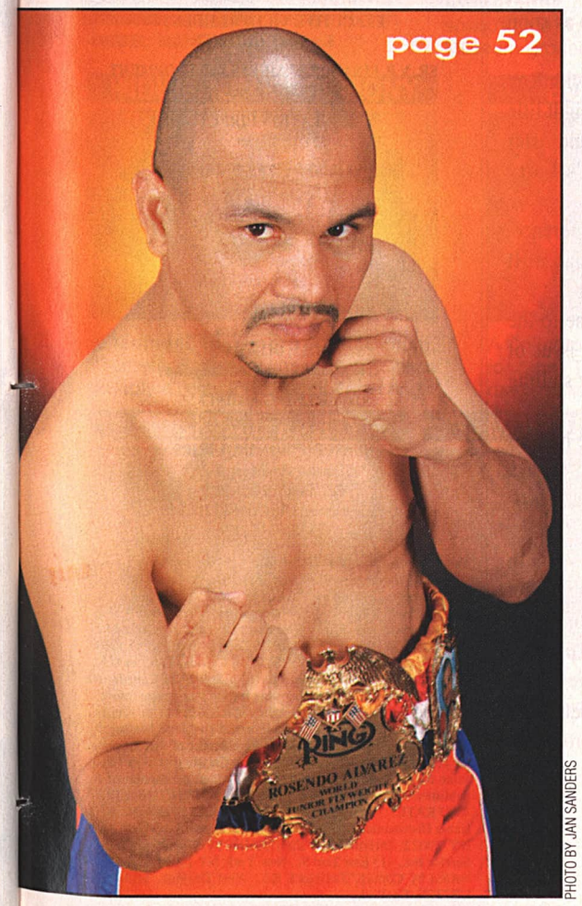

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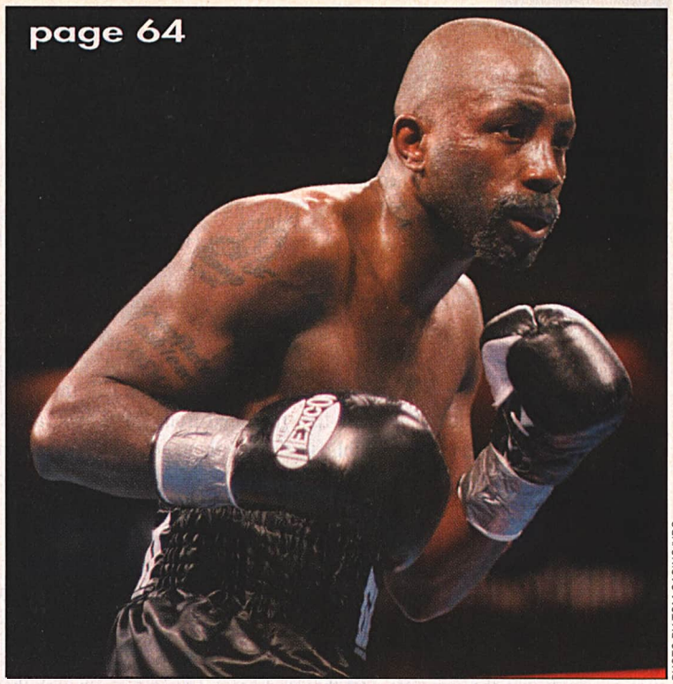

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

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RINGSIDE

THE RING has always enjoyed a special relationship with Bernard Hopkins. Our editorial offices are just outside of Philadelphia, and even though Hopkins moved from his native city to nearby Delaware a number of years ago, he still trains in Philly and is a big part of the local boxing scene.

During the 10 years we've been at our present location, Hopkins has probably visited us more than any other fighter. He was still a year away from winning the IBF middleweight title when THE RING first relocated from New York, and he was so hungry for publicity that he thought nothing of hopping in his car and driving to our office for an interview or photo shoot. There was no hassle with managers, promoters, or publicists, just give Hopkins a call, and he was there.

Things stayed the same after he won the IBF strap in April 1995. And I'll never forget the time, just three or four days after he beat Keith Holmes for the WBC belt, when he turned up for a cover shoot with a black eye. Most fighters would have begged off, but not Bernard. He knew it was important to us, and chose commitment over vanity. It was the same after he thrashed Felix Trinidad—although there was no black eye that time.

Then everything started to change. The cheers that Hopkins had received for his peerless performance against Trinidad turned to jeers when he split with long-time trainer Bouie Fisher and adviser Lou DiBella. A lot of people started to think of Bernard as a selfish ingrate who cast off those who helped him reach the top as soon as the big money started rolling in.

"The Executioner's" image continued to sag when he turned down fights with Roy Jones and James Toney. The low point came when he defended the middleweight title against Morrade Hakkar in March '03. It was a disgraceful mismatch, and after Hopkins had disposed of Hakkar came that nasty on-air spat with HBO's Larry Merchant.

Hopkins was still semi-ballistic when he arrived at the postfight press conference, and some of his malice was aimed at members of THE RING staff in attendance. It seemed that the friendly relationship between THE RING and Hopkins was over.

It was, therefore, a pleasant surprise when Bernard readily agreed to come to the office again in August for a Q&A session (which will appear in the February issue of *KO*). It was just like old times. He was his normal garrulous self, emotionally spilling his guts into a tape recorder, joking with the staff, and posing for photos.

Overall, I got the impression that Hopkins hasn't really let success change him, as many believe. It's more a case of not being prepared for how success would change the circumstances and people around him. This is not to say that he hasn't made mistakes; he has. But for better or worse, Hopkins has remained true to himself.

Yes, the bull-headedness that allowed him to persevere during all those years in the wilderness has come back to bite him in the ass since the Trinidad fight, but maybe, just maybe, it will still prove to be his greatest strength in the long run. Hopkins will finally be a free agent when his contract with Don King expires in January '04, which Bernard believes is the key to unlocking a glorious future where all the pieces—and marquee fights—fall into place. In essence, he's the same old Bernard up to the same old trick: gambling that he can prove everybody wrong yet again. Anybody foolish enough to dismiss his chances out of hand simply doesn't know Bernard Hopkins.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 83, No. 1 **January 2004**

The Ring

ANOTHER FINE KAPPA PUBLICATION

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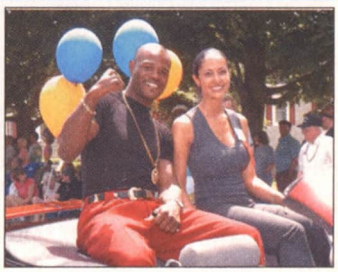


Hooray . . . Terry Norris strikes a fight pose for the fans.

CELEBRITY BOXING NIGHT

ANGEL MANFREDY

Fight Night . . . Popular boxers featured in action-packed bouts at Turning Stone Casino Resort.

MUSEUM GROUNDS

Autographs . . . George Foreman spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

INDUCTION CEREMONY

A Moment in Time . . . McCallum, Shulberg, Foreman, Locche, and Cokes proudly display their Hall of Fame rings.

BOXING CARD SHOW

A Collector's Dream . . . Boxing memorabilia for fans. The world's only all-boxing show draws collectors from throughout the world.

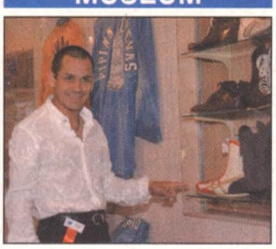
GOLF TOURNAMENT

Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

COCKTAIL PARTY

Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM

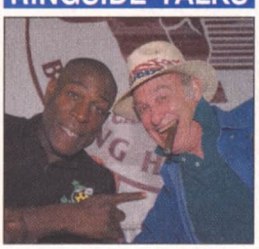


Ricardo Lopez points to his boxing shoes on display.

WORKOUT SESSIONS

Christy Martin laces up her gloves and Bernard Hopkins hits the speed bag.

RINGSIDE TALKS



Having Fun. . . Frank Bruno and Bert Sugar team up for a ringside lecture.

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ROUND ONE

HAIL AND FAREWELL

For the first time, Micky Ward returned home from an encounter with Arturo Gatti without a mark on his face. But it probably took a while for the smile to wear off, as the occasion for their most recent get-together was not a fistfight but a party to celebrate Ward's retirement from the ring.

The party was thrown by Ward's adviser, Lou DiBella, and held at the Mohegan Sun Casino, the site of the first Ward-Gatti fight. But instead of swapping punches inside the Mohegan Sun Arena, the duo traded compliments in front of a gathering of more than 200 celebrants at the Uncas Ballroom.

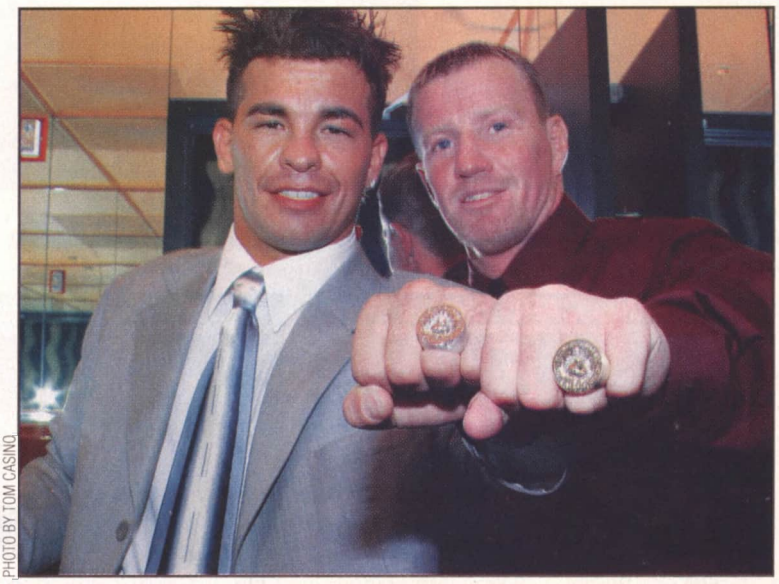


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Gatti and Ward show off their rings at Micky's retirement bash

It's a bit unusual for a fighter who never won a world championship to get such a grand sendoff, but Ward has slugged his way into the hearts of fans and boxing insiders alike with his never-say-die spirit and down-to-earth demeanor. In his hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts, he is a living legend.

HBO's Jim Lampley, who did the blow-by-blow for all three Gatti-Ward fights, was the evening's master of ceremonies. But despite the big names on hand and the elegant setting, the party had a folksy feel to it.

"There was a family atmosphere," said photographer Tom Casino, who presented Ward with a collage of photos from the third Gatti fight. "Micky's family kind of adopted Arturo and treated him like he was a brother."

Although it was Ward's epic trilogy with Gatti that brought him his greatest acclaim, the evening was a celebration of "Irish Micky's" entire career, which began with a first-round kayo of David Morin on June 13, 1985. Video highlights from many of his memorable bouts were shown, including his 10-round decision over Emanuel Burton that was THE RING's Fight of the Year for 2001. Ward's 38-13 (27) pro record includes numerous come-from-behind victories, many of them featuring his signature left hook to the body, the punch that helped him win the first Gatti fight, THE RING's 2002 Fight of the Year.

Gatti had a pair of rings made to commemorate their savage series, and presented one to Ward, who also dug into his pocket and had rings made for his entire team.

The highlight of the evening came when the normally taciturn Ward mounted the podium and spoke to the gathering of admirers. First he joked, saying of Gatti that he's never hit a guy so hard and so flush who just kept coming. "In camp I nicknamed him Jason," cracked Ward. But when the 37-year-old junior welterweight warrior spoke of the mutual friendship and admiration that had sprouted between the two, it was difficult to keep the lump out of your throat.

"Arturo is my friend for life," said Ward, "and if he ever needs me for anything, I'll be there."

Anybody who has ever met Ward or seen him fight knows that his comments came from the heart. It's the only part of him bigger than his hook.

—Nigel Collins

TYSON'S BOXING ENERGY SAPPED?

Is Mike Tyson trying to cut all of his ties to the boxing world? "Iron Mike" already disassociated himself from $300-million in ring earnings over the last 18 years, and in late-August, Tyson terminated his business relationship with manager Shelly Finkel. Now, Tyson is seriously considering a fighting career outside the realm of professional boxing.

Tyson resorted to Chapter 11 to ease his financial woes, but some may say he went Section 8 when he publicly challenged mammoth K-1 mixed martial arts champion Bob Sapp. Tyson and Sapp jawed with each other inside a Las Vegas ring in August after a Sapp victory on a K-1 pay-per-view event, setting up a possible showdown that would pay Tyson millions. The whole situation is curious, however, because Tyson has proven he can earn even more millions for bowling over the Clifford Etiennes of the world without having to negotiate which discipline's rules will be used.

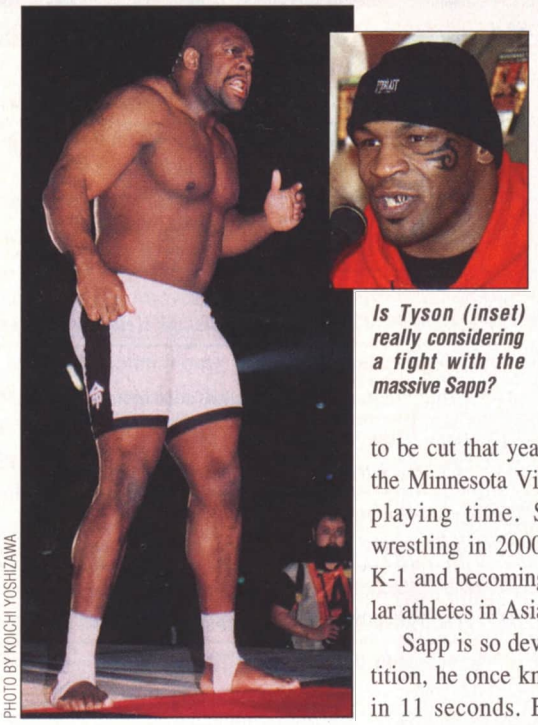


PHOTO BY KOICHI YOSHIZAWA

Is Tyson (inset) really considering a fight with the massive Sapp?

In August, Tyson signed a promotional contract with K-1, calling for him to receive nearly $4-million, plus a $200,000 signing bonus, according to Scott Coker, president and chief executive of K-1 in the United States. Details regarding a possible Tyson-Sapp match were still being discussed as of press time.

The 6'3", 350-pound Sapp was an all-PAC 10 offensive lineman at Washington in the mid-1990s. Sapp was a third-round draft choice of the Chicago Bears in 1997, then suffered the dubious distinction of being the highest-drafted player to be cut that year. He was picked up by the Minnesota Vikings, but saw minimal playing time. Sapp dabbled in pro wrestling in 2000, before being lured to K-1 and becoming one of the most popular athletes in Asia.

Sapp is so devastating in K-1 competition, he once knocked out an opponent in 11 seconds. But if he fights Tyson and isn't allowed to kick or grapple, chances are it will be Sapp who becomes the quickly kayoed opponent.

—Joe Santoliquito

CRUISER KIDNAP CAPER

Johnny Nelson, ranked in the world's top 10 cruiserweights by THE RING, is at the center of a bizarre kidnapping plot that is being investigated by several police forces in Britain.

The 36-year-old from Sheffield, England, and his family have been on round-the-clock police protection for several months. Details were kept quiet when the situation was made public in late-August, but it is understood that detectives acted on a tip-off received in London and took very seriously the information that someone was looking to kidnap Nelson.

They staked out father-of-two Nelson's home, which is surrounded by farmland in a remote area of Derbyshire. Hi-tech surveillance equipment was installed around the house. Wherever he drove, he was followed by an unmarked police car and, while he could not comment on the nature of the threat, he admitted that it was a troubling time for him and his family.

"I thought, *This is ridiculous, it can't be true*. It's like something you read in the papers about someone else, or see on the TV," Nelson told the BBC. "When they started going into more detail, I still thought there might have been a mistake. But when I saw the helicopter hovering above the house taking photos and the armed police 'round the back, I realized it was serious.

"At first it was a big, big shock, and then I just got used to them being around. As a fighter, once I feel fear it produces anger, so I was more angry than anything else that anyone would even consider doing this to me."

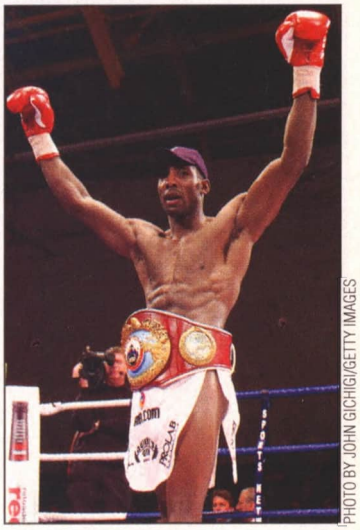


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Who wants to kidnap this man?

Brendan Ingle has trained Nelson since he was a kid coming to his gym on the outskirts of Sheffield and he has been shocked by this experience.

"It's been a load of hassle and this is why Johnny hasn't boxed since November 2002 (a disputed draw against Guillermo Jones), because his mind has obviously been preoccupied," said Ingle. "The full details have not come out yet, but the police are hopefully getting there with their inquiries, and please God they'll get to the bottom of it soon. It's been a constant worry, to be honest."

—Brian Doogan

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
8-15-03	Jesse Brinkley W 10 Danny Perez	ESPN2	jm	C+	B+	C+
Hey, what do you think the chances are that Brinkley will give Perez the rematch he deserves?						
8-15-03	**Jesus Chavez W 12 Sirimongkol Singmanassuk**	**Telef**	**WBC jl**	**A**	**A**	**B**
Chavez finally claims a title; it's overdue						
8-16-03	Juan Manuel Marquez KO 9 Marcos Licona	HBO	l	A-	D-	C+
What, this wasn't on pay-per-view? Someone at HBO must have screwed up						
8-16-03	Mark Johnson W 12 Fernando Montiel	HBO	jb	A	B+	C
To hell with "move and jab," they should have been giving Montiel the Heimlich between rounds						
8-21-03	Joe Hutchinson KO 8 Hector Quiroz	HBO L	w	C+	B+	C+
Hutchinson putting together a nice little streak, even if Quiroz has seen better days						
8-21-03	Jose Navarro W 12 Adonis Rivas	HBO L	jb	B-	A-	C+
Navarro survives occasional bombs to pass hard test in Rivas, a legitimate tough guy						
8-22-03	Kassim Ouma KO 8 Carlos Bojorquez	ESPN2	jm	B	C+	B-
Another good win for Ouma, even if Bojorquez' cut was nothing; bring on Candelo!						
8-23-03	Chris Smith KO 8 Frankie Sanchez	PPV	w	C+	C	C+
Another strong showing for Smith, but we'll pass on the bandwagon until he steps up the competition						
8-23-03	Ann Wolfe W 10 Valerie Mahfood	PPV	sm	C	B-	C+
Foxy Boxing it wasn't						
8-23-03	Laila Ali KO 4 Christy Martin	PPV	sm	A-	C-	C-
We're getting the sense Johnny McClain doesn't have an easy time of it at home						
8-26-03	Ray Austin KO 8 Jo-El Scott	ESPN2	h	C	B+	D+
If at first you don't succeed, sit on your damn stool						
8-26-03	Alex Trujillo KO 3 Luis Villata	ESPN2	l	C+	C-	C-
Broken knuckle or not, we doubt Villata was getting out of the round; time for Trujillo to step up again						
8-29-03	Kingsley Ikeke KO 6 Kenny Ellis	ESPN2	m	C+	B	C+
A guy can't even have a little nose bone showing without the ref stopping it?						
8-29-03	Kermit Cintron W 10 Jesus Valverde	Telef	w	C+	C+	C
Cintron shows he can go the full route in convincing win						
9-2-03	Tye Fields W 12 Sherman Williams	ESPN2	h	D+	C+	F
We're not saying Fields is a stiff, but we saw Marc Gastineau laughing at ringside						
9-5-03	Verno Phillips W 10 Michael Lerma	ESPN2	jm	B	B	B-
Phillips' good streak continues with solid win over game but outclassed Lerma						
9-5-03	Ivan Calderon W 12 Lorenzo Trejo	Telef	s	B-	D+	C-
What, Trejo dropped a decision to a top guy? No way!						
9-9-03	Audley Harrison KO 3 Quinn Navarre	ESPN2	h	C+	D	C+
Before you get excited, remember: Jimmy Thunder stopped Navarre seven years ago						
9-9-03	Andre Purlett KO 2 Lionel Butler	ESPN2	h	C-	D+	B
If this is the best ESPN2 can do for a main event, it's time either to increase the budget or fire the matchmaker						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

ROY'S ROID OUTRAGE

Location, location, location. Had Roy Jones' May 13, 2000, fight with Richard Hall been in Nevada, the fighters, both of whom tested positive afterward for anabolic steroids, would likely have been mired in a major scandal and handed down suspensions. But because the light heavyweight title bout took place in Indiana, there was no suspension and minimal scandal—and what scandal there was took more than three years to surface.

That's because the Indiana Commission and the IBF—the sanctioning body that had overseen the match and ordered the drug tests—barely acted on the test results and saw no need to make them public knowledge. And were it not for Hall making accusations about Jones in an interview with braggingrightscorner.com's Aladdin Freeman in the summer of 2003, the information might have remained swept under the rug forever. Of course, Hall conveniently downplayed what Indiana Commissioner Jacob Hall later revealed, which was that Hall tested nearly twice as high as Jones did. The commissioner also said that every fighter on the show was tested by the same company that regularly tests the Indiana Pacers basketball team, and only Jones and Hall's samples came back positive.

On August 2, 2000, the IBF sent letters to both fighters informing them of the test results, but the only action taken beyond that was that Jones was required to take drug tests following his next two fights. When his samples from his fights with Derrick Harmon and Julio Gonzalez came back negative, the light heavyweight champ, who had told Jacob Hall that he'd taken a legal, over-the-counter product called Ripped Fuel (which may or may not have caused the positive test), was considered exonerated by the IBF. No action at all was taken against non-titleholder Hall, who denies having used any steroids.

According to Greg Sirb, then-President of the Association of Boxing Commissions, the ABC was made aware of the violations when the test results came on, but had no authority over the matter.

"It was up to Indiana to act on it," Sirb said. "Nevada has drug testing, Pennsylvania has it, a lot of states have it. But a lot don't. Indiana is one of those that doesn't. And that's where the problem occurs. When a state doesn't have drug testing, yet does have title fights, you're going to run into this problem. The sanctioning body is going to require a drug test, but the state may not have guidelines in place to deal with it if it comes back positive."

Should Roy Jones and Richard Hall be labeled cheaters? That's a matter of some debate and interpretation. But the fact that they failed a steroid test in undeniable—even if it took three years too long for the world to find out.

—Eric Raskin

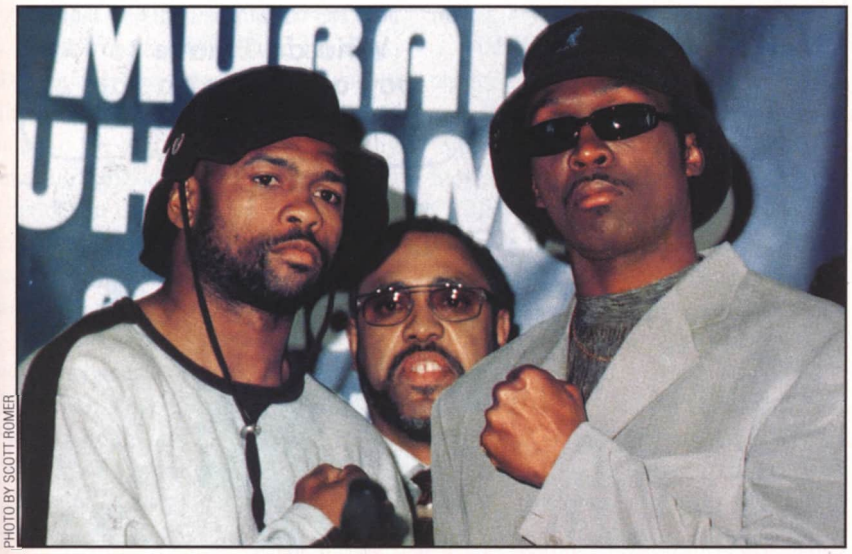
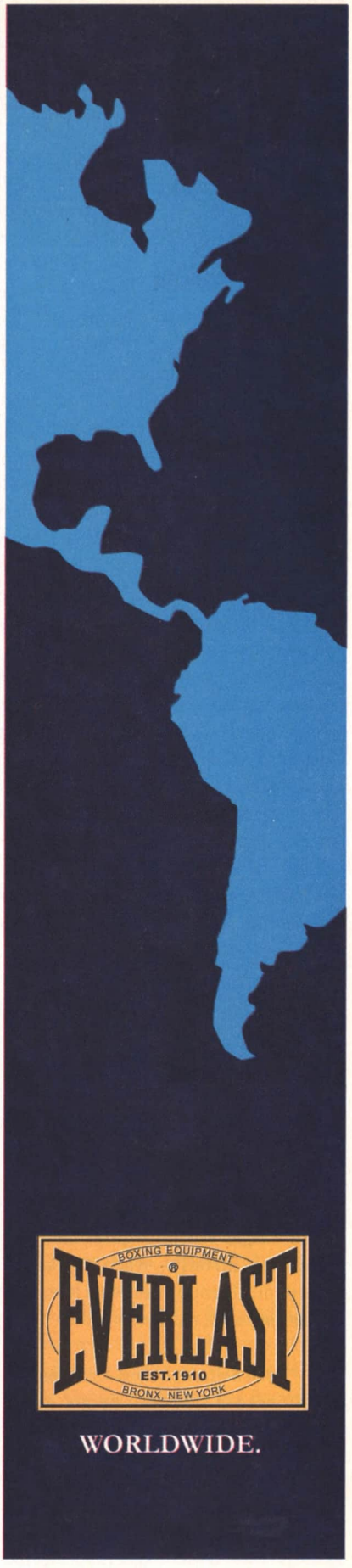
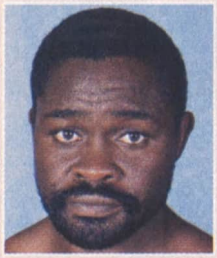


PHOTO BY SCOTT ROMER

Jones & Hall: Two positives make a negative for boxing



OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Nelson: African great honored by WBHOF

The California-based World Boxing Hall of Fame announced its 2003 inductees in August, with two-division former titleholder **Azumah Nelson** heading up the list of new entrants. Other fighters being inducted at the October WBHOF Banquet of Champions include three-time former junior flyweight titlist **Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez** and 1950s/'60s multi-division title contenders **Del Flanagan** and **Joey Giambra**. The WBHOF will also be welcoming three non-participants: manager/trainer/promoter **Benny Georgino**, manager **Ricardo Maldonado**, and writer **Michael Katz** ... 2000 U.S. Olympic silver medalist **Ricardo Williams** signed a promotional contract in August to fight for fellow former Olympic silver winner **Roy Jones**. Williams was expected to fight on the undercard of Jones' November 8 pay-per-view show ... Former lightweight titleholder **Paul Spadafora** parted ways with both of his trainers, **Tom Yankello** and **Jesse Reid**, in late-August, saying that they weren't working together well and he didn't want to have to choose between them. As we went to press, **Emanuel Steward** appeared the leading candidate to take over in "The Pittsburgh Kid's" corner ... A Florida woman filed suit in mid-August against **Christy Martin**, accusing the female fighter of punching and choking her during a January 1, 2003, altercation in a parking lot. **Linda Rappa**, 38, claims Martin attacked her after an argument, while Martin claims she was only acting in self-defense after Rappa's husband, **Paul Sabacinski**, punched her first. Rappa is seeking unspecified damages ... **Alex Hilton**, of the troubled fighting Hilton family, was charged in mid-August with extorting money from a restaurant manager in Montreal, after he allegedly demanded by threat of violence that the manager hand over $40. Hilton, who has in the past been convicted of several crimes ranging from identification fraud to resisting arrest, was released on bail ... Longtime New Jersey promoter **Gabe LaConte** had his license restored in late-August, almost a year after it was lifted by the New Jersey Athletic Control Board. State officials never said what caused them to deny LaConte his license in the first place, but LaConte has said he was told it was based on comments attributed to him that appeared in an obituary for a reputed organized crime figure ... What LaConte went through was nothing compared to what fellow promoter **Oleg Hug** of the Ukrainian promotional outfit National Box Promotion faced in late-August, when he was punched in the face at a meeting by **Dimitry Dyachuk,** National League of Professional Boxing of Ukraine vice president. The punch came following a verbal dispute, and Hug was left with a concussion and a cut that required 10 stitches ... Former British and Commonwealth super middleweight titleholder **David Starie** announced his retirement from the ring in late-August after a 31-4 (24) career that included 12-round decision losses to major belthold-ers **Joe Calzaghe** and **Sven Ottke**. Starie, 29, said he intends to become a full-time firefighter ... Veteran Phoenix, Arizona, promoter and manager **Steve Eisner** died of cancer in late-August. Eisner, 74, was a fixture in the Phoenix boxing scene since moving there in 1970 ... Heavyweight **Dan Stepniewski**, who boxed in the 1960s under the name **Ski Goldstein** on the advice of a manager who wanted to sell him to the public as a Jewish fighter, died of a heart attack in mid-August at the age of 65. The Wisconsin-born, California-based Stepniewski posted a 13-6 (10) record over a seven-year career.

Stepniewski: Former "Ski Goldstein" dies at 65

THE PUNCHLINES

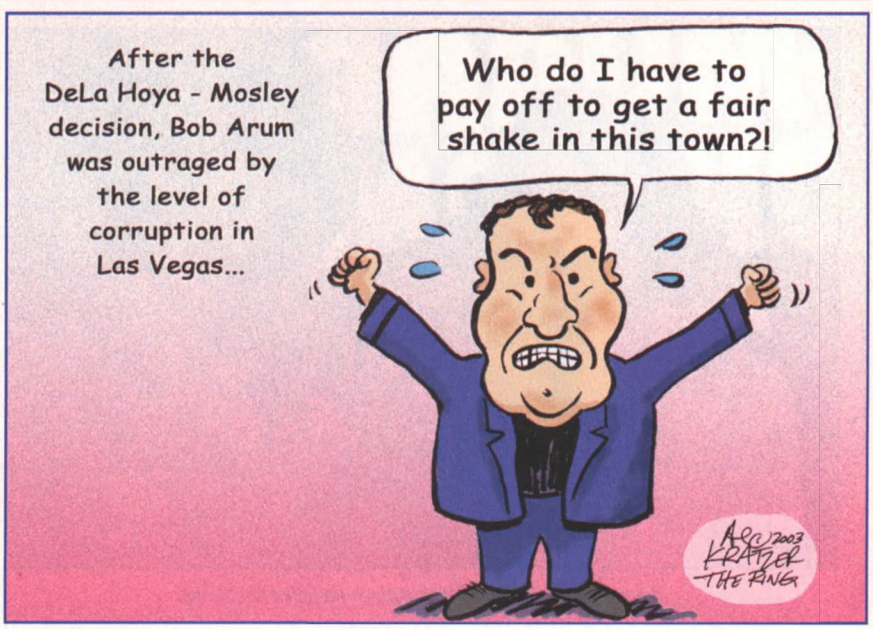
"What's next? Is someone sticking pins in a Lonnie Bradley doll?"

—Ron Katz, matchmaker for Bradley's promoter, Sugar Ray Leonard, after the snake-bitten fighter had a fight fall through at the last minute—literally—when opponent Epifanio Mendoza injured himself warming up in the dressing room

"Alka Seltzer? I know Oscar probably needed that after he got done working with the man."

—Floyd Mayweather Sr., intentionally mispronouncing the name of Robert Alcazar, former trainer of Oscar De La Hoya

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended September 15, 2003)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Heavyweight/Light Heavyweight
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
6. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
7. **ERIK MORALES**
   Featherweight
8. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
9. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Welterweight
10. **VERNON FORREST**
    Welterweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Anthony Mundine's win over Antwun Echols elevates the Australian from ninth to third, while Echols falls from third to fourth. Markus Beyer (fourth last issue) descends to seventh after his dubious disqualification win over unrated Danny Green, Beyer's second consecutive highly controversial victory. As a result of the other shifts, Charles Brewer drops from seventh to eighth, and Mads Larsen moves down from eighth to ninth.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Tito Mendoza (fourth last issue) is now campaigning as a super middle, so the Panamanian has been removed from the 160-pound rankings, allowing everyone below him last issue to slide up a notch. This creates an opening at number 10, which has been filled by streaking Kingsley Ikeke. Also, unbeaten Felix Sturm enters at number nine after scoring a close decision win over Hector Javier Velazco (10th last issue). Velazco departs the rankings following the loss.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Shane Mosley's rematch win over Oscar De La Hoya makes Sugar Shane (fifth last issue) the new world champ at 154 pounds, while De La Hoya slips to the number-one contender slot. Also sliding down, one spot each, to accommodate Mosley's advancement are Winky Wright, Fernando Vargas, Javier Castillejo, and Daniel Santos.

WELTERWEIGHTS: After losing by knockout to Joe Hutchinson, Hector Quiroz (10th last issue) exits. He's replaced by Jose Rivera, who's fresh off a win over previously undefeated Michel Trabant for a vacant 147-pound alphabet trinket.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Juan Lazcano's impressive 11th-round kayo win over Stevie Johnston promotes "The Hispanic Causing Panic" from fourth to first, while Johnston takes a slight dip from third to fourth. Jose Luis Castillo (first last issue) and Leonard Dorin (previously second) both move down one spot as a result of Lazcano's leap.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: While winners Acelino Freitas (number one) and Jesus Chavez (number three) hold steady, there's some shifting among the men they defeated in August. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (eighth last issue) comes out of the ratings after his one-sided loss to Chavez, while Jorge Barrios, who was much more competitive against Freitas, enters at number 10. Thanks to Sirimongkol's exit, Carlos Hernandez moves up from nine to eight, and Cassius Baloyi advances from 10 to nine.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Previously unrated Mark Johnson's upset win over Fernando Montiel (third last issue) earns "Too Sharp" the number three spot, while Montiel drops to fifth. Everyone below moves down a spot, and Katsushige Kawashima (10th last issue) is squeezed out.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Undefeated Puerto Rican Olympian Ivan Calderon earns the 10th spot with his lopsided win over Lorenzo Trejo, replacing the far less active Juan Palacios.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Although there are several justifiable ways to rank the quartet of Mosley, De La Hoya, Ricardo Mayorga, and Vernon Forrest, by placing the strongest emphasis on the most recent results, we've elevated Mosley from 10th to fourth, right above De La Hoya, who drops from fourth to fifth. Everyone below moves down one spot as a result of Mosley's promotion. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended September 15, 2003

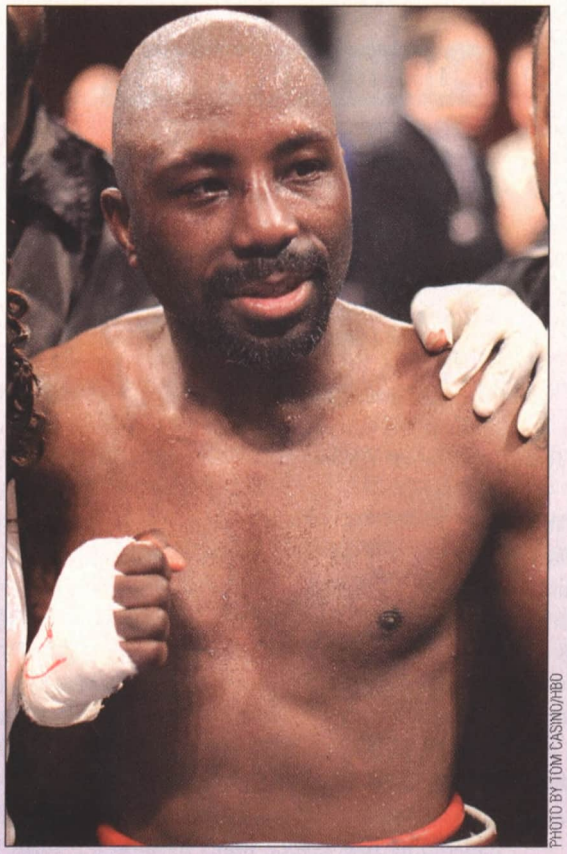


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Mark Johnson is back in the junior bantam ratings at number three

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 41-2-1 (32)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 36-2 (20)
2. **CORRIE SANDERS**
South Africa 39-2 (29)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)
4. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 32-2 (31)
5. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
Atlanta, GA 38-6-2 (25)
6. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 42-3-1 (37)
7. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-4-1 (29)
8. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 50-4 (44)
9. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 41-2 (38)
10. **JOHN RUIZ**
Chelsea, MA 38-5-1 (27)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: SHANE MOSLEY
Pomona, CA 39-2 (35)

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 36-3 (29)
2. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 45-3 (25)
3. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 23-2 (21)
4. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 56-5 (38)
5. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 27-2-1 (20)
6. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 18-1-1 (12)
7. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 36-9-1 (18)
8. **J.C. CANDELO**
Colombia 27-5-3 (19)
9. **ALEX GARCIA**
Mexico 21-0 (20)
10. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 46-5 (30)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Mexico 57-3 (40)

1. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 44-1 (33)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 41-2 (33)
3. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-5-1 (24)
4. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 62-13 (28)
5. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 19-2-1 (9)
6. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 52-3-2 (28)
7. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 34-2-1 (22)
8. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 23-4-1 (12)
9. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 34-1 (22)
10. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 18-0 (14)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-2 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 37-2-1 (28)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 49-3-1 (34)
3. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 23-2-2 (14)
4. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 22-2-1 (12)
5. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 34-3 (25)
6. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 41-4-1 (21)
7. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 29-1-1 (13)
8. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 20-0 (16)
9. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-2-3 (15)
10. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 34-1-1 (18)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 29-3 (27)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 41-1-1 (29)
3. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 25-1-1 (22)
4. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 53-2 (26)
5. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 23-11-1 (19)
6. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-3-2 (14)
7. **PETE FRISSINA**
Tarpon Springs, FL 27-3-1 (15)
8. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 14-0 (13)
9. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 29-4 (17)
10. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 28-2-2 (13)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JAMES TONEY**
   Ann Arbor, MI 66-4-2 (42)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 32-1 (28)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 29-2 (21)
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 19-0 (16)
5. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 42-12-2 (28)
6. **GUILLERMO JONES**
   Panama 29-2-2 (22)
7. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 21-1-1 (20)
8. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 26-5 (24)
9. **SEBASTIAN ROTHMAN**
   South Africa 17-1-2 (12)
10. **VIRGIL HILL**
    Bismarck, ND 49-4 (23)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 21-1 (17)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-0 (38)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 39-9-1 (27)
4. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadelphia, PA 21-3-1 (7)
5. **MEHDI SAHNOUNE**
   France 24-0 (21)
6. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 34-1 (22)
7. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 44-4 (29)
8. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-2 (21)
9. **RICHARD HALL**
   Winter Haven, FL 26-4 (25)
10. **GEORGE JONES**
    Paterson, NJ 19-2 (13)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 36-0 (29)
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 32-0 (6)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 19-1 (14)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-5-1 (26)
5. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 36-5-3 (13)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-3-1 (18)
7. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 28-1 (11)
8. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 39-9 (27)
9. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 44-2 (37)
10. **SYD VANDERPOOL**
    Canada 34-2 (23)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 42-2-1 (31)

1. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-2-1 (25)
2. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 38-1 (35)
3. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 35-4 (26)
4. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 30-3 (19)
5. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 18-3 (13)
6. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AK 17-0 (12)
7. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO 48-4-1 (30)
8. **EVANS OURE ASHIRA**
   Denmark 23-0 (13)
9. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 19-0 (9)
10. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
    Canada 18-1 (10)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: RICARDO MAYORGA
Nicaragua 25-3-1 (22)

1. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 28-3 (19)
3. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 31-2 (11)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 32-0 (25)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 39-2 (25)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 23-10 (18)
7. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 22-2-1 (20)
8. **TEDDY REID**
   Adelphi, MD 22-5-1 (16)
9. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 21-1-1 (13)
10. **JOSE RIVERA**
    Worcester, MA 37-3-1 (24)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 52-3 (30)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 29-1 (21)
3. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 36-6 (28)
4. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 23-1-1 (16)
5. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-2-1 (16)
6. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 33-1 (10)
7. **DIOBELYS HURTADO**
   Miami, FL 35-3-1 (23)
8. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 32-0 (24)
9. **OMAR WEIS**
   Los Angeles, CA 36-4-3 (16)
10. **MIGUEL COTTO**
    Puerto Rico 17-0 (14)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 30-0 (20)

1. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-2-1 (25)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 47-6-1 (43)
3. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 21-0-1 (7)
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
5. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-0 (22)
6. **COURTNEY BURTON**
   Benton Harbor, MI 19-1(11)
7. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 49-5-1 (33)
8. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 55-3-2 (40)
9. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 46-10-2 (33)
10. **ALDO RIOS**
    Argentina 35-2 (6)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 34-0 (31)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 29-1 (18)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-2 (28)
4. **PHILLIP NDOU**
   South Africa 31-1 (30)
5. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 37-1 (31)
6. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 23-1 (6)
7. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 39-2-1 (32)
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 39-3-1 (24)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 28-1 (16)
10. **JORGE BARRIOS**
    Argentina 39-2-1 (29)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 29-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 23-0 (23)
3. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 42-3 (27)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 21-1 (14)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 26-1-1 (20)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 24-1 (15)
7. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-4-1 (11)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 30-3-1 (20)
9. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 38-0 (28)
10. **OSCAR ANDRADE**
    Mexico 30-22-1 (17)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 33-0 (18)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 47-2 (25)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 27-0 (20)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 27-4-2 (16)
5. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 20-2 (13)
6. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 14-1-2 (10)
7. **PETER CULSHAW**
   England 23-1-1 (12)
8. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 14-0-2 (8)
9. **DAMAEN KELLY**
   Ireland 18-1 (8)
10. **LORENZO PARRA**
    Venezuela 21-0 (17)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-1 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 34-3-1 (25)
2. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 28-2 (23)
3. **PICHIT SRIWAT**
   Thailand 27-2 (12)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
5. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 24-2 (13)
6. **MELCHOR COB-CASTRO**
   Mexico 66-9-4 (30)
7. **MBHIKIZA MYEKENI**
   South Africa 17-1 (6)
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-2 (21)
9. **JOSE VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 36-13-2 (21)
10. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
    Thailand 50-3-2 (20)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 30-1-1 (19)
2. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-2-1 (10)
3. **EDGAR CARDENAS**
   Mexico 30-10-2 (16)
4. **YUTAKA NIDA**
   Japan 14-1-3 (7)
5. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 49-2-2 (17)
6. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 23-10 (6)
7. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 32-7-2 (22)
8. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 22-2-1 (19)
9. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 29-1-1 (24)
10. **IVAN CALDERON**
    Puerto Rico 17-0 (3)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

RED ROSES FOR A BLACK-AND-BLUE LADY

The worst part for Christy Martin, the hurt that's lingering long after her nose had stopped bleeding and the bruises on her face had disappeared, is the knowledge that she really is a better fighter than Laila Ali. Or course, that and $5.95 will get "The Coal Miner's Daughter" this copy of THE RING, in which she can read plenty of analysis of how the amateurish Ali took her apart layer by layer like a West Virginia strip mine.

It's one of the Ten Commandments of fisticuffs: Thou shalt not come into a bout shorter, lighter, slower, and older than one's opponent and expect to be the guest of honor at a victory party after the punching has stopped. This is true not just of fights in rings, but in taverns, on street corners, etc. Heck, it was probably even true in prehistoric times, when the taller, heavier, faster, younger caveman beat up his decidedly disadvantaged rival for the right to drag the prettiest girl in the neighborhood around by her hair.

Speaking of dragging someone around by her hair, well, that's about the only indignity to which Martin wasn't subjected. She was staggered numerous times, floored twice, and reduced to taking the 10-count while resting on one knee and looking at her corner in resignation. So much for her prefight worries that the relatively inexperienced Ali might run around the ring like a "scared rabbit." Heck, "The Greatest's" little girl was so effective stinging like a bee that she didn't even have to try floating like a butterfly.

PHOTO BY CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES

Martin had determination—but not much else—on her side against Ali

(Rumble, young woman, rumble.)

To be frank, Martin hasn't ever been a sympathetic figure during her career. She was always a bit too cocky and a little too foul-mouthed for my tastes, and a couple of questionable decisions she'd received gave the impression that she was sometimes being rewarded more for her status than her accomplishments. Moreover, she has never been very gracious to the opponent when things haven't gone her way. Martin's idea of giving praise to the conquering Ali was, "She's too big, she's just too big. She was in great shape and she

kept on coming. She still fights like an amateur."

Watching Martin struggle and then go down in the biggest outing of her career, however, was awfully difficult to watch. (Apart from the fact that a woman pounding another woman is always tough for me to take.) That's right, the softie in me actually felt quite badly for her.

It probably had to do with the reaction of a group of casual fight fans (and *casual* is the operative word here) that watched a tape of the bout with me a few days later. Almost all of them cheered the big-mouthed but beautiful Ali, and poked fun at the stocky and slow Martin. They viewed Martin as nothing more than the latest tune-up foe for the most famous distaff duke-out darling in the world. And how truly unfair that is.

For while she wasn't the first female fighter, Martin was the first to be taken as seriously as a man. With her physical conditioning, power, knowledge of fundamentals, intensity, and heart, she gave women's boxing credibility, turning it from a novelty act on the level of midget wrestling to a legitimate pay-per-view event. Martin was the first lady leather-launcher to appear on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and to sit down with Katie Couric on *Today*. By the time she fought Ali, a $250,000 purse for a woman wasn't something to be laughed at, but, rather, something to be demanded and received.

Part of what helped Martin elevate the ladies' game in the eyes of the public was no doubt the fact that, while she could curse, spit, bust up, and dig a left hook to the ribs as well as any guy, she could be feminine and soft-spoken, too. But although she's an attractive woman who looks a lot different with her tresses blow-dried and her makeup applied than with her hair full of sweat and her mouthpiece in, Martin has never been considered a looker. And it must have bothered her greatly to keep reading about Ali's cheekbones, Lucia Rijker's hair, and Mia St. John's boobs.

In fact, it must have bothered her to keep reading anything about Ali, whom many considered to have been in possession of the torch even before Martin officially passed it on August 23. So in an effort to regain her spot at the summit of the women's game, reinvigorate her career, and pocket an awfully nice quarter of a million bucks before she hung up her sports bra, the 35-year-old Martin signed for a fight that the tale of the tape declared a suicide mission. Stupidity? Arrogance? False hope? Try guts.

She went down the way we'd expect Christy Martin to go down, didn't she? Martin reminded us of her intensity, courage, and toughness in the 6 minutes 48 seconds she hung around before being shown the floor. She moved in and out, worked the head and body, and fired back with whistling hooks even when she was stunned and appearing ready to topple. The problem, of course, was that her punches had no impact on the larger Ali, while even the most ordinary of Ali's blows seemed to hurt Martin.

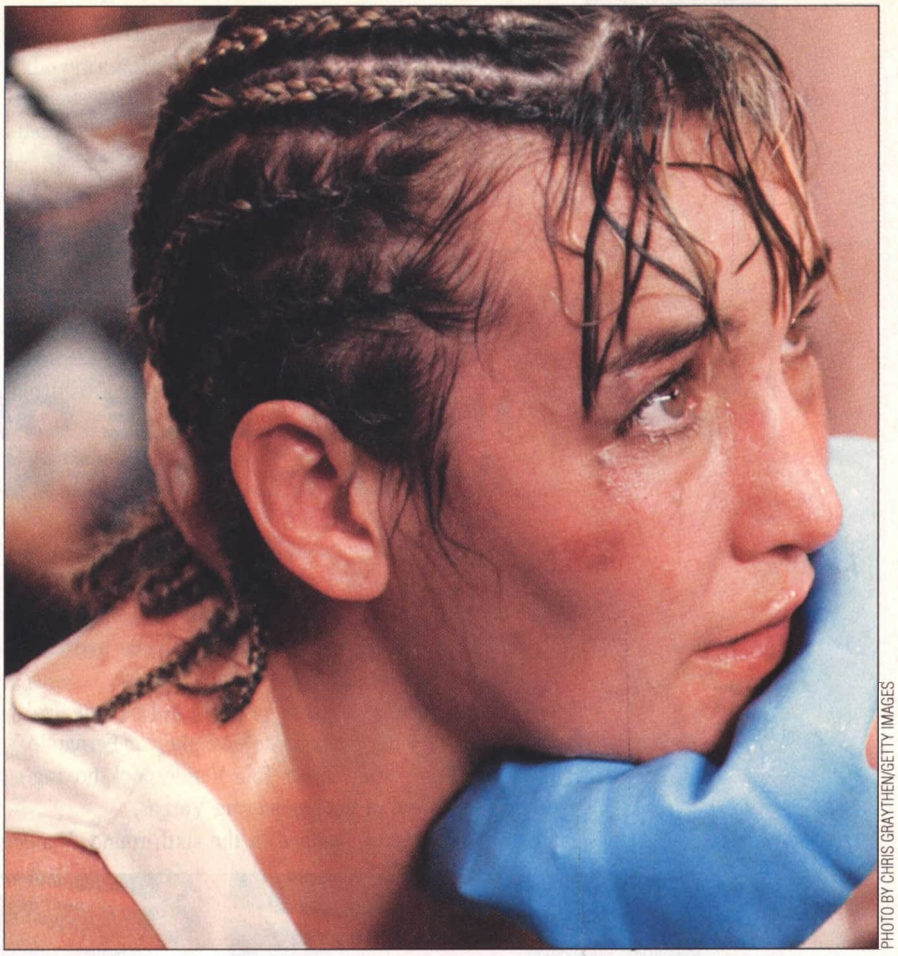


PHOTO BY CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES

A sad ending for a pioneering warrior

Two conflicting thoughts were racing through my mind when it became apparent that Martin's night was going to end with her eyes turning glassy and then teary. First, was my hope that referee Fred Steinwinder III (what a great name for a wrestling manager, by the way) wouldn't stop the action without allowing Martin to go down and out like a true warrior. And second was my disbelief that Martin's trainer-husband, Jim, could actually watch his soulmate get pummeled like that and not climb through the ropes to rescue her.

Perhaps Hubby was clinging to some faint hope that his wife was going to connect with the perfect left hook and Ali was going to hit the floor, heels over head, the way that her pop did one night in Madison Square Garden. And the Christy Martin Story was going to have a second act that was better than the first. She was going to once more be the biggest name in women's boxing, land on the cover of somebody's magazine again, and, judging by the way things are going in this age of shameless promotions and reality TV, maybe battle, let's say, a male flyweight in a battle-of-the-sexes handicap match. Instead, Martin took the gloves off and went home. It might be time, she says, to have a baby. Hopefully, she'll stay home to raise her child and say goodbye to the gym forever.

You know, there's an old saying: If the queen had balls, she'd be the king. Well, Christy Martin taught us otherwise. She had balls for sure, but she'll always be the queen. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

INVISIBLE OPPONENTS AND HIDDEN DANGERS

The fight game and the Dark Ages have more in common than is generally realized. Histories of the period are all about kings and queens, dukes and duchesses, knights and their ladies. The books don't say much about the serfs who tilled the soil, built the castles, groomed the horses, and made everything work. Their masters didn't give a damn about them, and for the most part, neither do historians nor anyone else.

Fast forward to summer 2003 in Los Angeles' Grand Olympic Auditorium. It was a welcome home party for junior middleweight star Fernando Vargas, back from a nine-month suspension for steroid use. Non-famous Fitz Vanderpool, boxing's 21st-century equivalent of a serf, was hired to stand in front of the conquering Vargas.

After getting stopped in the sixth round, Vanderpool could be found in a figurative dumpster alongside used coffee grounds, old newspapers, orange rinds, pork bones, and cigarette butts. But after the contest, who looks for the opponent? Whatever he might say gets lost in the wind.

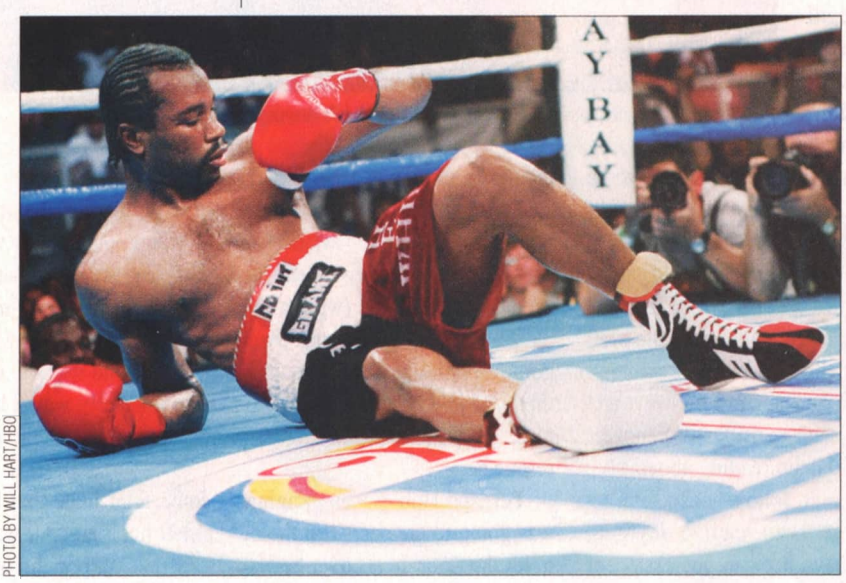


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Vargas couldn't floor Vanderpool, but the logo did

But I couldn't help noticing that when he appeared at the postfight press conference, Vanderpool's right leg was bandaged from the ankle up to the knee. Unable to walk, he was half carried by two friends, one on each side.

Had Vargas come out like that, no doubt someone would have asked him about it. But Vanderpool could have made the scene with an arrow through his head and no one would care.

Vargas and members of his team said a few things about his performance and their plans for the future, and then stepped off the makeshift podium. Media people with cameras, microphones, tape recorders, and notepads swarmed around "Ferocious Fernando" like bees.

Vanderpool, who might as well have been invisible, slowly worked his way back toward the dressing room with his two friends supporting him. I went over and asked him about his injury. Before answering, he carefully eased down into a seat a few rows from the ring that workmen were already taking apart.

"I twisted it when I slipped on the canvas," he explained. "It started blowing up right away." This happened, he said, in "an earlier round." He wasn't sure which one. Probably it was round four, when he first slipped on the slick beer logo. He slipped three more times during the bout.

Those painted-on logos—usually advertising beer—are like the weather. Everyone complains

about them, but no one does anything. Sponsors pay well to put them there. If it's a nationally televised contest, the price goes up.

The logos have grown bigger and deadlier over the years. After water and perspiration from the fighters soaks the painted surface, it behaves like an ice slick. Some years ago, Showtime's Jay Larkin poured Pepsi Cola onto a slippery, very troublesome logo. It seemed to help. But that was a makeshift solution. A sticky canvas could also cause an injury.

If the NFL were crazy enough to put such a career-ending hazard on the field, you can bet the players union would have plenty to say about it. But fighters don't have a recognized union that could negotiate some civilized solution. That means it's up to the state commissions. Safety is their primary function.

But the commissions have stayed clear. They want shows to make a nice profit. So do I. If the sport didn't make money, it wouldn't exist. But there are limits.

Vanderpool, 35, was thrilled to pull in an HBO-sized purse in the twilight of his career. So he didn't even complain, though he would have preferred to fight with two good legs under him. By round five they were splayed out, his movements clumsy. Everyone thought his legs were gone from exhaustion.

Imagine what would happen if a really huge star, Oscar De La Hoya or Roy Jones, for instance, were seriously injured by such an advertising atrocity. But those are noblemen. No one gives a damn about serfs.

TONS OF TITLES: When promoter Lou DiBella switched opponents for rising middleweight Jermain Taylor, discarding Rene Arostegui in favor of Freddie Cuevas, the NABF wouldn't go along. Although it had sanctioned the original matchup, it refused to put up a title for the new one. Lo and behold, the kindly WBC noticed it had a Continental Americas belt no one was using, so it stepped in and grabbed a piece of the action.

DiBella's publicist, Norman Horton, who's sometimes asked on to call hamburger Salisbury steak, wrote a press release labeling the WBC's intercession a fortunate circumstance. Norman, by the way, is efficient, affable, and a pleasure to work with. By contrast, sour John Beyrooty, a publicist on contract to Showtime, recently barred me from a press conference, apparently because I arrived late. Some way to get publicity. But I digress.

Horton knows but naturally failed to mention that if a fee were involved, Jose Sulaiman's WBC alphabet gang would sanction a fight between two winos in an alley. The WBC has already invented more titles than Campbell's Soup.

Taylor, shutting out Cuevas 120-108 on all three cards, picked up the spare title. But if the WBC fails to have overturned a $31-million judgment it lost to ex-light heavyweight titleholder Graciano Rocchigiani, no amount of sanctioning bouts, bake sales, or fast-talking will keep it in business.

HEAVYWEIGHT BULLETIN: Champion Lennox Lewis Postpones Rematch With Vitali Klitschko. Not this year, he says.

So just when will the champ give Vitali another shot? Any time now. As soon as fish play golf. When Rush Limbaugh runs a marathon. When Woody Allen moves to L.A. When Johnny Tapia sits still. When Don King shuts up.

Actually, Lewis was smart to hesitate. He's 37. To put that into perspective, "The Greatest," Muhammad Ali, was 36 when he first opposed Leon Spinks. The obviously shot Ali fought flat-footed and barely resembled the stick-and-move master of his youth. Spinks, who'd won only six of his seven pro fights, astonished everybody, including himself, when he won the decision.

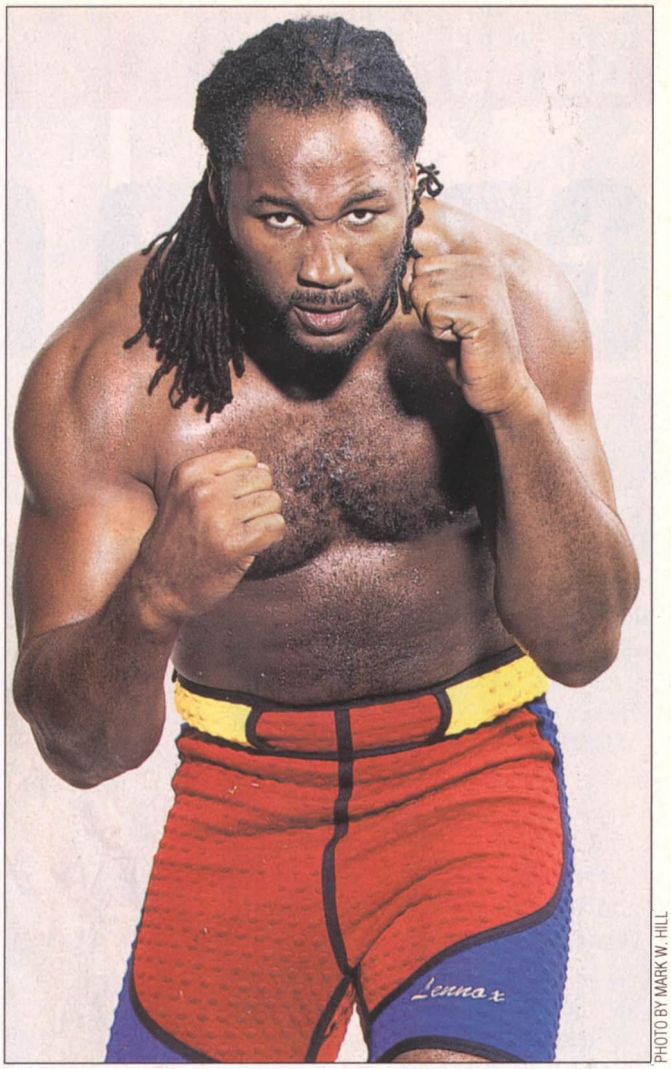


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Maybe Lennox should forget Vitali rematch

Ali stuck around and avenged his loss, then tragically hung around for 21 more rounds of serious punishment from Trevor Berbick and Larry Holmes before finally hanging up his gloves.

Now Ali, who served us so well in so many ways, must live his days as a poster child for why boxers should not stay in the game too long. We don't need any more posters like that. So when should Lewis give Klitschko a rematch? Maybe when O.J. catches the real killers.

ANOTHER LEDERMAN MAGOO: HBO's Harold Lederman scored the 12th round of Ricardo Mayorga-Vernon Forrest II for Mayorga, which is preposterous. The champ wasn't even punching. He jumped around in early celebration of his victory while Forrest landed some clean shots.

Lederman turns in his scores round by round, just as commission-appointed officials do. So scores for earlier rounds can't be changed. Sometimes a weak judge adds up the numbers, doesn't like his total, and then plays cosmetic games in the final round. ■

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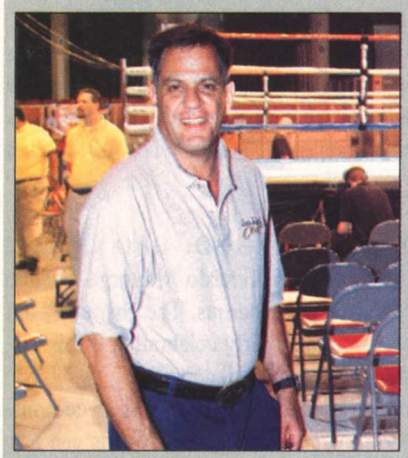
Tickets: Prices vary from show to show. If it's a hot card, don't wait; seats sell fast.

Advice to greenhorns: Early arrivals park inside the Grand Olympic property. Other lots are nearby. Best bet to avoid traffic and parking: Metro Transit's light rail—clean, well-patrolled, and inexpensive—stops right on the corner at the Grand Station.



Olympic owner Steve Needleman

The home of boxing from more than 75 years

By Ivan Goldman

PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

Well-meaning but misinformed individuals call the historic Grand Olympic Auditorium the Madison Square Garden of Los Angeles. A silly claim. The real "Garden" is no more. The name skipped around a series of Manhattan buildings over the years. If somebody stuck the Empire State Building name on another building, would it really be the Empire State Building?

But the Olympic *is* the Olympic, the same venue that opened in 1925. It's the biggest, oldest structure in the U.S.—and probably the world—that was built primarily for boxing and still used for boxing. If you can find a bigger, older one, let us know.

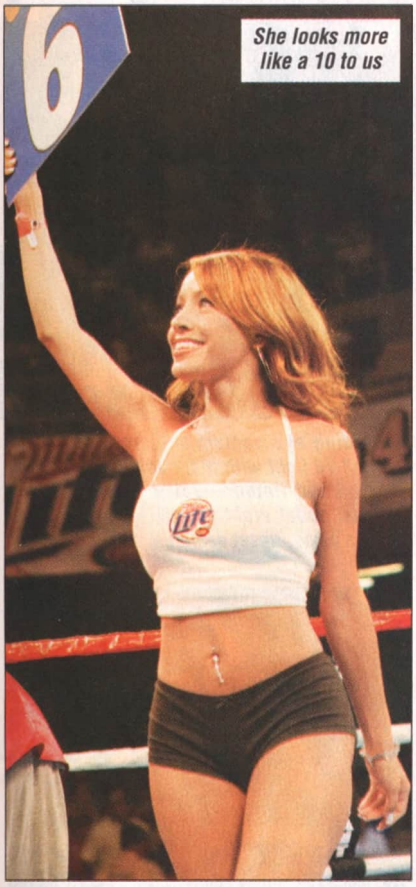
The hottest fighters in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s fought there. Crowds were sprinkled with movie stars. It was a place to see and be seen. The Olympic remained a vital part of the sport into the 1960s and '70s. The history of Hispanic fighters in the U.S. couldn't be written without it. Fighters like Danny "Little Red" Lopez and Bobby Chacon were fixtures.

Virtually every fight scene in those old boxing movies was filmed at the Olympic. Three of the five *Rocky* movies shot scenes there. It's still used frequently for film and TV shoots. But there was a rough period when the Olympic was sliding into disrepair. By the '80s, crowds became too rowdy for even the most tolerant fans, and in 1987 it closed. The building remained standing only because the neighborhood got so rough, the place wasn't worth tearing down.

Then real estate investor Steve Needleman, who has a feel for history, bought

There's not a bad seat in the refurbished Olympic

Fans greet early arriving fighters



Sylvester Stallone returns to the venue where **Rocky** *was filmed*

the dilapidated shrine and got it back into shape, with new roofing, plumbing, wiring, and paint. He tore out the old 16-inch seats and replaced them with 22-inchers. This reduced seating capacity from more than 10,000 down to around 7,000, but what's left is comfortable.

"People must have been really skinny in the old days," Needleman said.

The cheapest balcony seats are only 90 feet from the ring. You can't get that kind of boxing viewing in a basketball stadium, where the stands seem to stretch all the way to Bulgaria.

Get your tickets early

Needleman reopened the Olympic to boxing in '94. Several promoters, including Bob Arum, tried to make it work without much success at first. But then Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions went in, and word-of-mouth turned positive. Other promoters followed.

The cross-town Forum, which helped put the Olympic out of business, no longer holds boxing events. The newer Staples Center, with seating for 18,000, now gets the supercards. But the Olympic is a fine fit for smaller shows. Main Events presented Fernando Vargas vs. Fitz Vanderpool there and sold out in three days.

Prices are reasonable. The cheap seats for Vargas-Vanderpool were only $17. Beer is $3.75. The Olympic now has an enthusiastic but well-behaved crowd. And the movie stars, who always know what's hot and what's not, are back. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

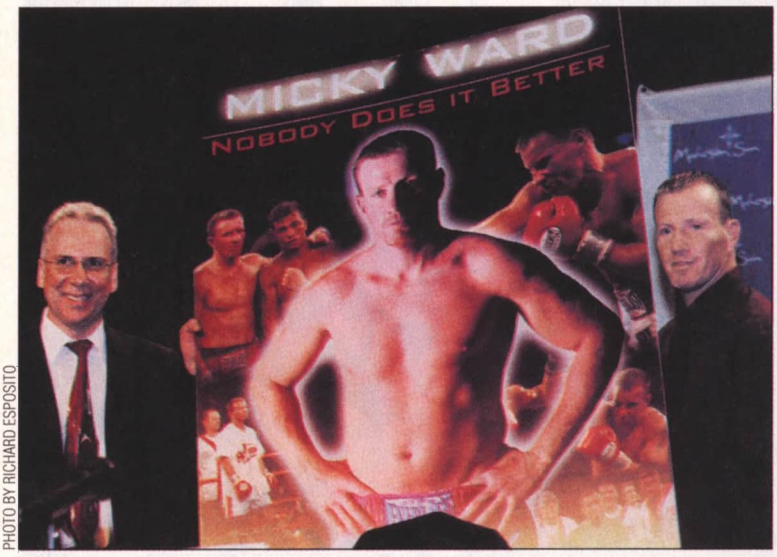


PHOTO BY RICHARD ESPOSITO

Among the many gifts Micky Ward received at his retirement celebration in August, one of the nicest was this attractive photo collage given to him by photographer Tom Casino (left). We're not sure how Arturo Gatti felt about the phrase "Nobody Does It Better" being used to describe the man Gatti ultimately got the better of, but the night was all about Micky, so Arturo wasn't about to make a stink.

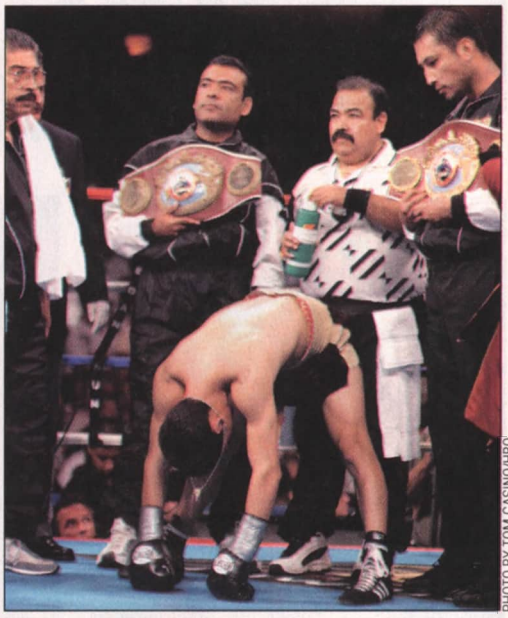


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Talk about avoiding eye contact with your opponent! Before his August 16 fight with Mark Johnson, Fernando Montiel got good and limber—but it didn't help him much, as he took about eight rounds to warm up and ended up losing a close, upset decision.

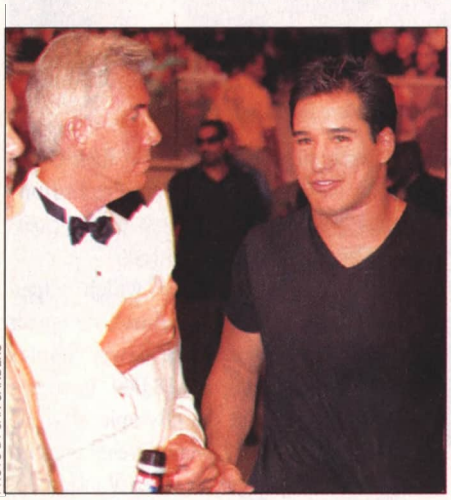


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

It's no surprise that one of the actors from a show called Saved By The Bell *found his way into boxing, but it is a surprise that it was the dorky Dustin "Screech" Diamond (who tried a little* Celebrity Boxing *last year) and not the athletic-looking Mario Lopez. But Lopez does train casually and is a fight fan, and he was caught hobnobbing with ring announcer Michael Buffer at the Fernando Vargas-Syd Vanderpool fight in Los Angeles in July.*

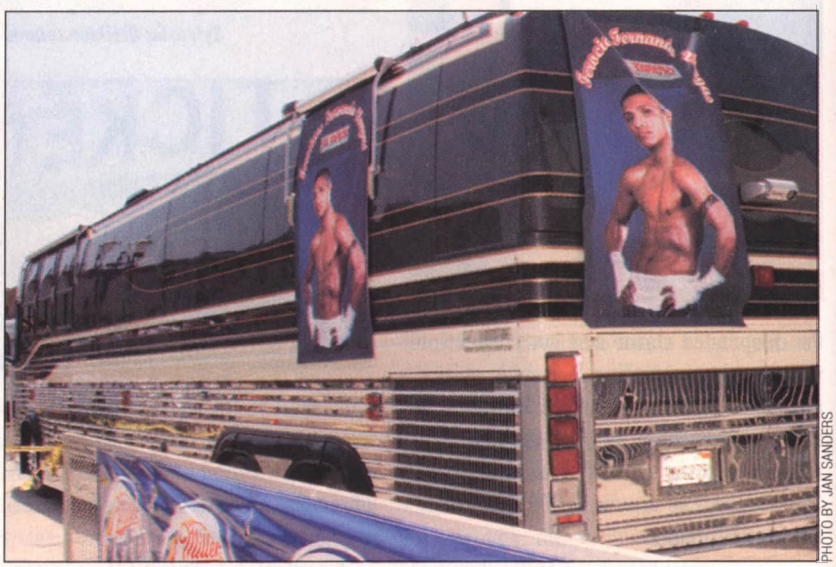


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

In his constant quest to one-up Oscar De La Hoya, Fernando Vargas fell way short in the personalized bus department. Still, having his own bus with his picture on the sides of it puts Vargas ahead of just about everybody else in the world.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

If it's quantity you're looking for when it comes to round-card girls, you can't do much better than what the D.C. Convention Center provides. The six-pack of (from left to right) Maritza, Dee, Marissa, Aisha, Jo Jo, and Sharon provided fans with plenty of variety between rounds at an August fight card—sort of like what fans saw in the ring, with an assortment of fights featuring the likes of Keith Holmes, Derrell Coley, and Isra Girgrah.

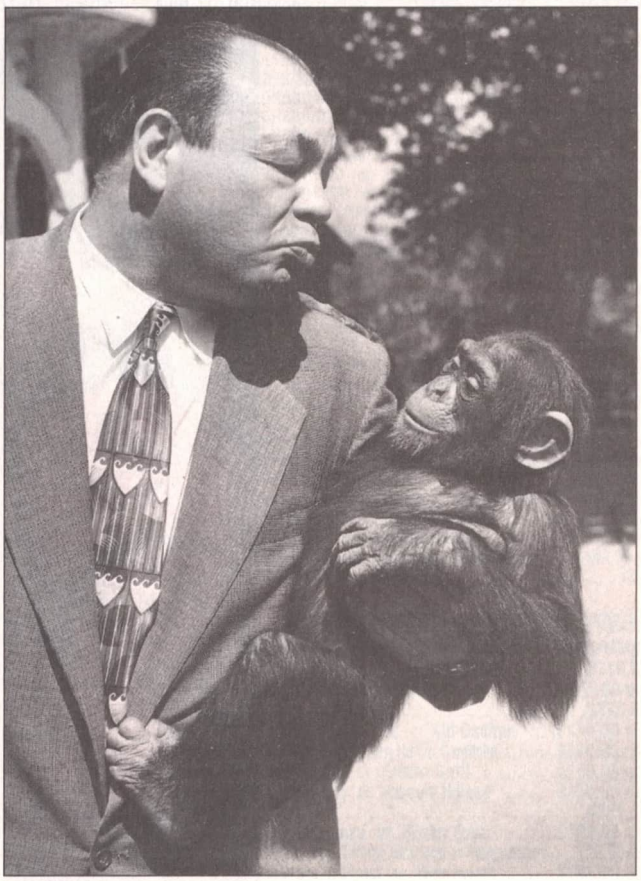
PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Wanna know why Mark Johnson's so smiley in this picture? Because he finally found someone on the D.C. boxing scene shorter than he is. That's referee Kenny Chevalier looking sharp and hanging with "Too Sharp."

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

If ever there was an appropriate time for ring announcer Mark Beiro to sport his eye patch, this was it. The goofy Beiro was definitely in his element here, sharing the ring with a pirate and some of that pirate's booty at a recent ESPN2-televised fight card.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



"Two-Ton" Tony Galento wasn't the best-looking guy in boxing history, but surely he could've done better for himself that puckering up to this furry friend. Why Charlton Heston was chosen over Galento to star in Planet Of The Apes, *we'll never know.*

NEW FACES

BERNARD DUNNE

Featherweight

By Patrick Myler

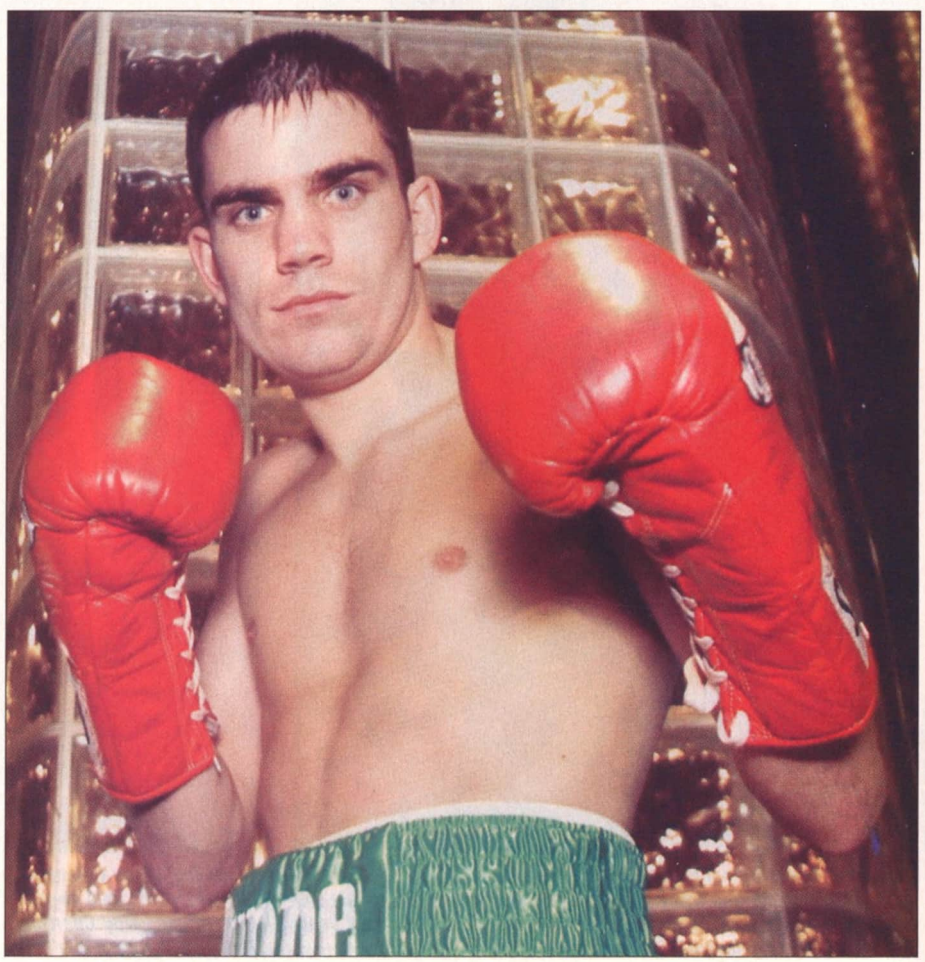
Touted by his promoter, Sugar Ray Leonard, as the hottest prospect to come from Ireland since Barry McGuigan, featherweight Bernard Dunne's scheduled express train ride to the world title hit a sudden derailment in Buffalo, New York, on October 18, 2002. Due to face Tony Espinosa, Dunne was shocked to learn at the weigh-in that he had failed a brain scan and was placed under immediate suspension by the New York State Athletic Commission.

The stunned fighter, told that the MRI had revealed an unexplainable abnormality, found it hard to take on board what Ralph Petrillo, the commission's medical coordinator, was saying: "When you have any potential risk with the brain, among the things that can happen are paralysis, permanent seizures, and, in the worst case, you could be killed. We must

(Continued on page 90)

PRO RECORD

2001				
Dec. 19	Rodrigo Ortiz, Oroville, CA			KO 2
2002				
Aug. 2	Cristian Cabrera, Ledyard, CT			KO 2
2003				
Jan. 3	Simon Ramirez, Norman, OK			KO 1
Feb. 7	Eric Trujillo, Las Vegas			KO 1
March 8	Oscar Villa, Tustin, CA			W 4
April 25	Oscar Rosales, Norman			KO 1
June 6	Terrell Hargrove, Uncasville, CT			KO 1
July 3	Mario Lacey, Chester, WV			KO 1
FIGHTS	**WON**	**LOST**	**DRAW**	**KOs**
8	8	0	0	7



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PAZIENZA/ROSENBLATT • DELAHOYA/RUELAS • TYSON/HOLYFIELD
HOLYFIELD/TYSON II • CHAVEZ/DELAHOYA • OSCAR DELAHOYA
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II • TYSON/RUDDOCK II • JONES/PAZIENZA
CHAVEZ/GAMACHE • MOORER/FOREMAN • DURAN/CAMACHO • F. TRINIDAD
JONES/GONZALEZ • DELAHOYA/CARR • F. MAYWEATHER/RIOS • R. DURAN
DELAHOYA/RIVERA • IRON MIKE TYSON • DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY • DELAHOYA/QUARTEY • DELAHOYA/CHARPENTIER
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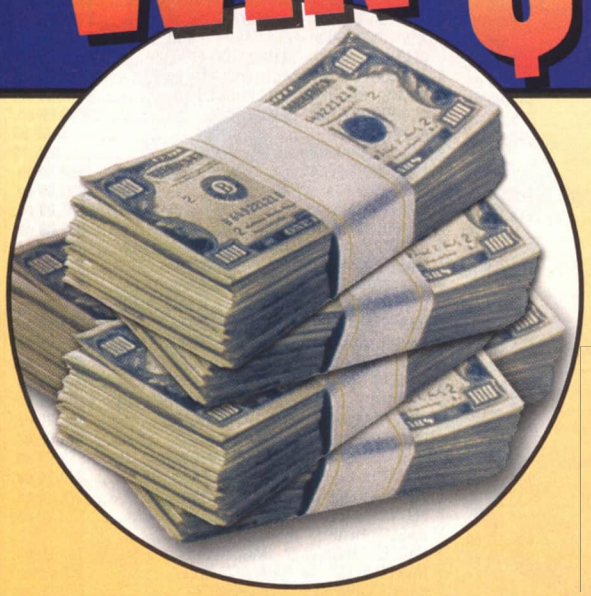

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MOSLEY VS. DE LA HOYA

De La Hoya grimaces after fielding a left from Mosley in their rematch. Even though "The Golden Boy" was favored to retain the junior middleweight championship, Mosley took the title via unanimous decision much to the delight of him and his father-trainer, Jack Mosley (opposite).

PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

The 10 Questions You Want Answered!

By Nigel Collins

A red-faced Bob Arum was already pacing back and forth on the podium as the media filed into the postfight press conference. Neither of the fighters had arrived yet, but the volatile promoter couldn't hold back any longer. Oscar De La Hoya, the fighter his promotional empire is built around, had just been upset by Sugar Shane Mosley, and Arum lashed out in paranoia-fueled anger.

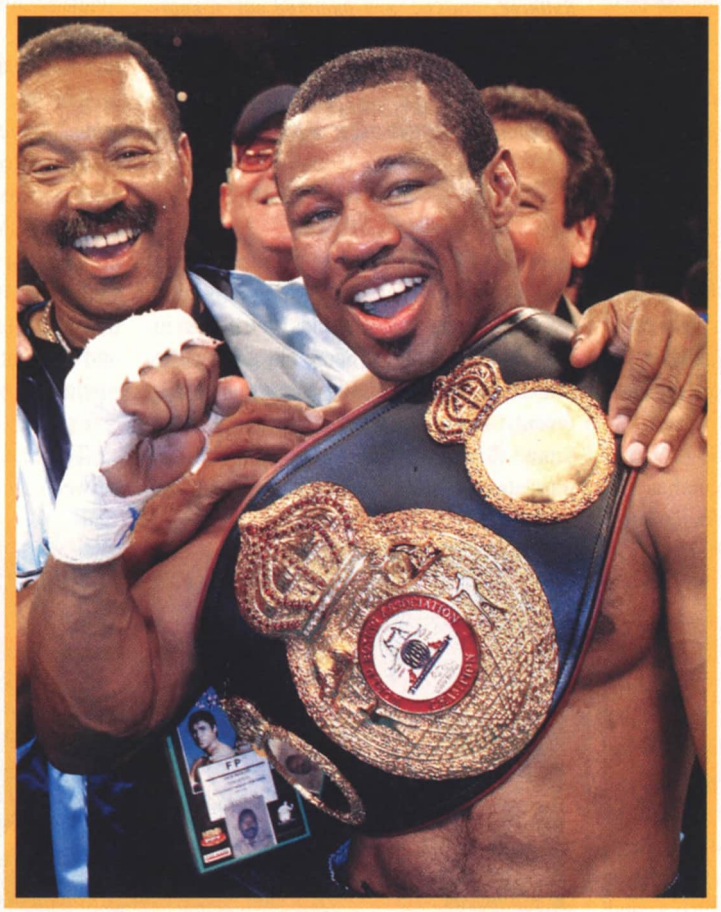
"I think there was something fishy," said Arum. "I can't say something went on, because how do I know? I don't have any evidence at this point. I'd be making it up. But I think something was fishy. But again, I don't know. I think. And I certainly don't have any evidence there was something fishy."

Had Arum stopped there, he probably wouldn't be facing a disciplinary hearing in front of the Nevada Athletic Commission, but after De La Hoya sprinkled his own brand of manure on his promoter's seeds of discontent, Arum took his unfounded accusation a step further. The Monday following the fight, he claimed that commission member Dr. Flip Homansky had tampered with the composition of the judging panel in order to get back at Arum because of disagreements they've had regarding the need for fighters to take mandatory magnetic resonance imaging and magnetic resonance angiograph tests.

Homansky said that the allegations were "utterly and completely ridiculous and totally false." Commission chairman Luther Mack added that he was "extremely disturbed" by Arum's unsubstantiated charges and challenged the promoter to present evidence to back up his contentions at the hearing.

Thus, what should have been a glorious night for boxing was sullied by a severe case of sour grapes. Although neither De La Hoya nor Arum offered any proof, they both said they believed there was a plot afoot to deprive De La Hoya of the decision in his much-anticipated rematch with Mosley.

In an effort to shed some light on what amounts to a fabricated controversy, THE RING has asked, and answered, a series of pertinent questions that have arisen in the wake of Mosley-De La Hoya II. Hopefully, readers, even those who believe that De La Hoya should have gotten the nod, will come away with a greater understanding of what transpired inside the ring at the MGM Grand Arena on the evening of September 13, 2003.



Was the fight fixed?

Let's try to think this thing through logically. Why would anybody want to kill the golden goose? It simply doesn't make sense. With heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis in semi-retirement, Mike Tyson fading into "bolivian," and Roy Jones' heavyweight experiment on hold for the foreseeable future, there's not another boxer on the planet that can come remotely close to generating the same sort of money as De La Hoya.

If anybody had a political edge it was "The Golden Boy," whose widespread appeal made the superfight possible. And let's not forget that Arum lives in Las Vegas, where his company, Top Rank, has been based since the 1980s. But none of that stopped Arum or De La Hoya from making reckless accusations without a shred of evidence.

Up to a point, De La Hoya's beef with the decision was easier to swallow. Virtually every fighter involved in a close fight thinks he won, which is entirely understandable. Where De La Hoya went astray was when his disappointment turned into irresponsible finger-pointing.

"I will seek a full investigation on what happened," he said as he addressed the media wearing an expensive suit and sporting a large white bandage over his right eye. "I just feel in my heart that decision should have gone to me. I'm happy to have the financial resources to put the best lawyers on this. I'm not a sore loser; I'm doing this for boxing."

What a crock! If De La Hoya were really interested in doing the right thing for the sport that made him a multimillionaire, he would have kept his allegations to

himself, and simply demanded a rematch.

"I think he's emotional right now," said the levelheaded Mosley of De La Hoya's accusations. "I don't know if he'll ever accept that he got beat, but I know he'll have a different opinion about the fight once he goes back and reviews the tape."

While it's always possible that subsequent revelations will prove otherwise, so far the only thing that smelled fishy about Mosley-De La Hoya II were the words that came out of Arum and Oscar's mouths.

Who really won?

The biggest difference between Mosley and De La Hoya in their rematch was punching power. De La Hoya never visibly hurt Mosley, but The Golden Boy was shaken on at least two occasions, in the ninth and 12th rounds. He also displayed severe discomfort during the so-called championship rounds, grabbing and wincing as Mosley's body attack threatened to cave him in.

"I think my bodyshots slowed down his jab," said Mosley. "He was afraid to throw his jab because he knew I was coming back with bodyshots."

Some significant headshots also buzzed De La Hoya, including a wicked left hook and a right behind the ear in the ninth that had him momentarily stunned, and a flush right early in the 12th that capped Mosley's stretch drive. True, Oscar may have landed more punches overall, but Mosley's were clearly heavier.

"If it was an amateur fight, De La Hoya would have won because all punches are equal," said judge Duane Ford. "In pro boxing, harder shots are judged differently. A hard punch counts more."

De La Hoya, 36-3 (29), also looked like the loser. Forget the cut alongside his right eye, which was the result of an accidental clash of heads in the fourth round, but the nick on his nose and the other marks on his face were caused by Mosley's fists.

A final clue was the crowd's reaction to the decision. Although chants of "Mosley" were heard from time to time, it was largely a gathering of De La Hoya worshipers, and they accepted the decision without the chorus of boos and cries of "bulls___" that normally fill the air when fans disagree with a verdict. This time they seemed to understand that it was purely a case of the other guy winning a close fight, something De La Hoya and Arum couldn't bring themselves to admit.

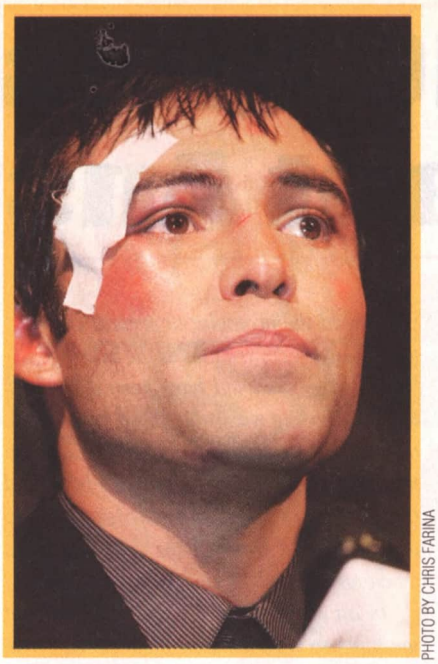


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Battered, bruised, and bummed out: A sour-faced De La Hoya faces the media after his second loss to Mosley. Both De La Hoya and his promoter, Bob Arum, reacted badly to the defeat and said they thought there had been a conspiracy to deprive Oscar of the decision.

Why was there such a wide difference of opinion?

A lot of factors contributed to the scoring discrepancy. To start with, when judging a fight with a lot of close rounds, you can go in one of two directions: Score all of the close rounds even, or try to find a discernable difference. THE RING did a bit of both and scored the fight for Mosley, 117-113. That translates into seven rounds for Sugar Shane, three for De La Hoya, and two even. Even if those two even rounds had gone to De La Hoya, Mosley would have been up seven rounds to five, or 115-113, which was the tally turned in by all three official adjudicators, Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa), Anek Hongtongkam (Thailand), and Ford (Nevada).

Reasonable people can differ on such matters, and while the majority of ringside media scored the fight for Mosley, a significant number felt otherwise. This occurred for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the highly subjective nature of judging a fight. Some folks emphasize the number of punches a fighter lands, while others, including THE RING, give more credence to powerpunching. It is, after all, a fight, and the object is to inflict as much damage on your opponent as possible. There are instances where the sheer volume of punches outweighs punishing blows, but that wasn't the case here.

The fact that all media members are not seated the same distance from the ring can also lead to varied interpretations. There were approximately 700 media credentials issued for Mosley-De La Hoya II, which means that a good number were sitting quite a distance from the action. Fortunately, THE RING was located on the second row, directly in back of HBO's broadcast team, which gave us an excellent vantage point.

There is also a major difference between seeing a fight live and watching on

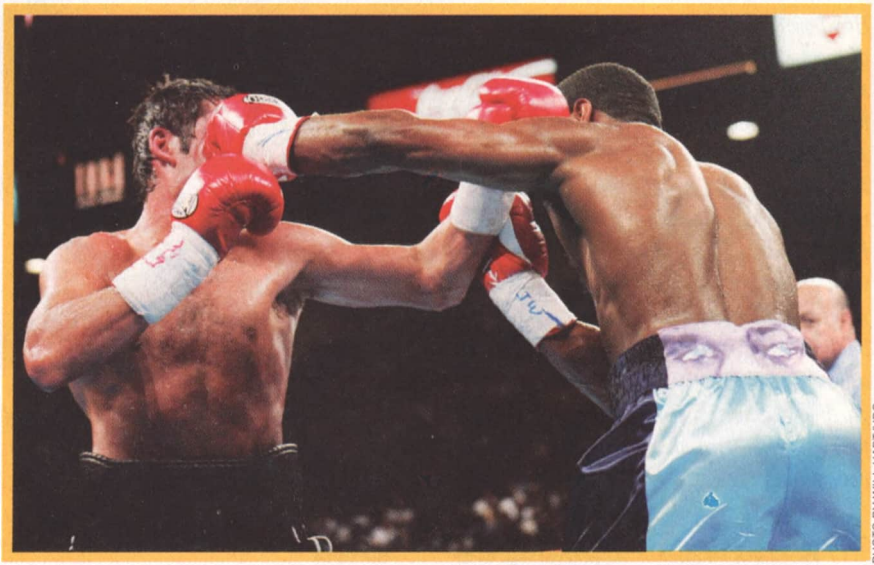


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mosley mashes De La Hoya's face with a left. According to CompuBox's punch stats, De La Hoya landed 221 punches, compared to 127 for Mosley. But the challenger's blows were harder and more damaging, which allowed him to win by a margin of 115-113 on all three official scorecards.

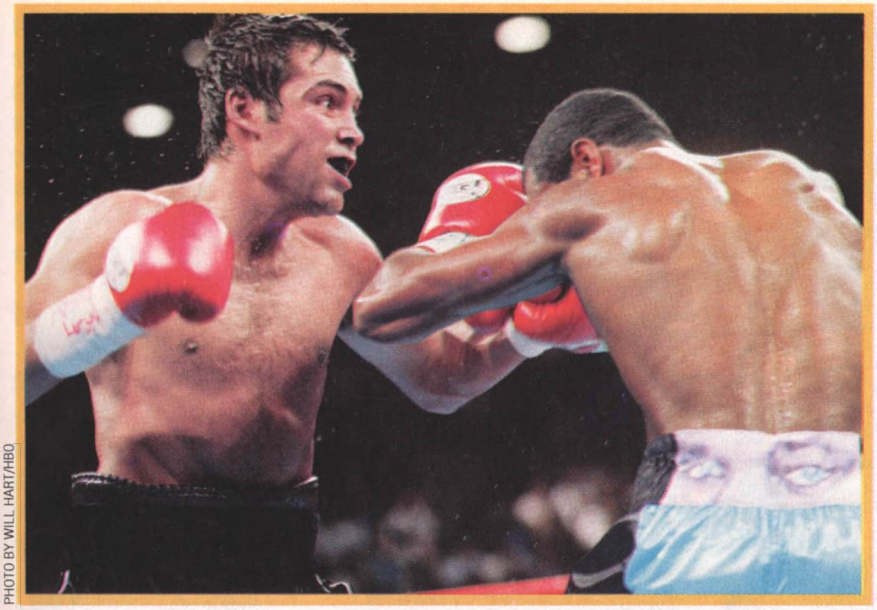


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

De La Hoya hammers Mosley with a hook. The Golden Boy performed well, and it's easy to understand why he thought he won the fight, but his postfight accusations of dishonest judging were way out of line and reinforced his image as a spoiled brat.

television. Even though TV viewers get to see the action up close and have the benefit of replays, it is much easier to evaluate the harm a punch causes watching live. This, of course, doesn't explain why all four members of the HBO crew, Jim Lampley, Larry Merchant, George Foreman, and Harold Lederman, scored the fight for De La Hoya. Some have suggested that the quartet was swayed by De La Hoya's importance to their employer, but while THE RING makes no such claim, it's safe to say that the broadcast team's comments sway viewer opinion.

Preconceived notions can also influence how some individuals score a fight. Even though Mosley had won their first encounter, De La Hoya was a prefight favorite, mainly because he had performed better than Mosley in recent outings and had momentum on his side. It was no surprise that most prognosticators picked De La Hoya to win.

Actually, judging a professional boxing match is not as complicated as some would have you believe. ESPN's Max Kellerman has a simple formula that works most of the time: At the conclusion of a round, ask yourself which of the two fighters you would rather be in that round. Generally, the fighter you pick deserves to win the round.

But regardless of who you thought won the fight, it's important to keep in mind that not even the members of the media who scored the fight for De La Hoya claimed that it was a fix. That has to count for something.

Do CompuBox's punch stats give a false impression?

Only if you give them more weight than they deserve.

To start with, punch counting is an inexact science. The numbers are fed into a computer by human beings who are as fallible as the rest of us. But even assuming that the punch stats are reasonably accurate, they are, as Merchant used to stress when HBO first began utilizing them, quantitative, not qualitative. The instant you forget that, they lose all validity.

CompuBox has two categories of punches: jabs and powerpunches. In other words, every punch that is not a jab is considered as a powerpunch, even a light tap. And what about the jabs themselves? Should a flick to the face count as much as a solid jab that knocks a man's head back?

To many old-school fans, the numbers provided by CompuBox are nothing more than window dressing, a way of pandering to American sports fans' love affair with stats. Unfortunately, many who came to the game after the advent of CompuBox in 1986 put far too much emphasis on punch stats, clinging to them like a life raft in boxing's sea of uncertainty.

Bottom line: Punch stats are a useful tool for gaining insight into what's going

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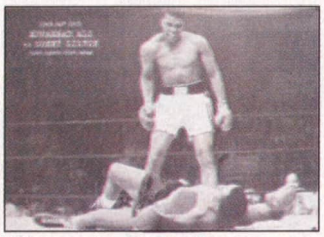
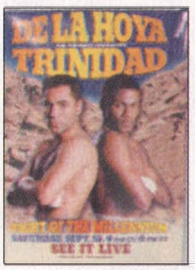
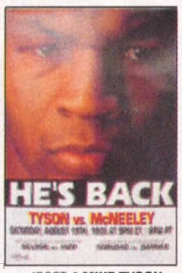


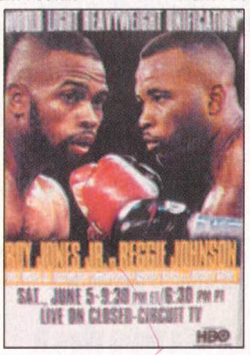
#POST-11 MUHAMMAD ALI vs. SONNY LISTON



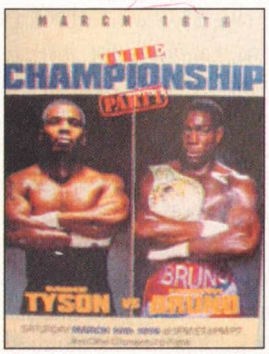
#POST-10 OSCAR DE LA HOYA vs. FELIX TRINIDAD FIGHT POSTER



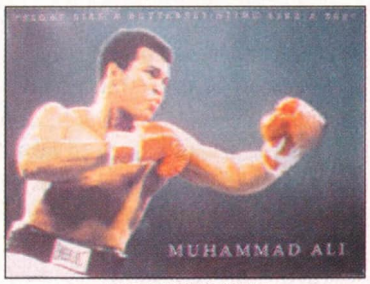
#POST-2 MIKE TYSON vs. PETER McNEELEY FIGHT POSTER



#POST-6 ROY JONES JR. vs. REGGIE JOHNSON FIGHT POSTER



#POST-1 MIKE TYSON vs. FRANK BRUNO II FIGHT POSTER



#POST-19 MUHAMMAD ALI

FightPosters.com

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

A sellout crowd of 16,268 filled the MGM Grand Garden Arena and helped make Mosley-De La Hoya a huge financial success. A third fight between the two would probably be even bigger because of the controversy manufactured by De La Hoya and Arum.

on inside the ring, but they should *never* be used as a criterion to decide who won a fight.

How good of a fight was it, anyway?

If we take Mosley and De La Hoya's performances at face value, it seems pretty clear that neither of them is quite as good as they were three years ago. Their first fight featured an extremely high skill level and was fought at a faster, crisper pace. That both are now appreciably heavier could have had a lot to do with it. They're sure not welterweights anymore. Both weighed in at the junior middleweight division limit of 154 pounds the day before the fight, but when HBO weighed them again on fight night, De La Hoya had gained four pounds, Mosley seven.

The first half of the rematch featured more feinting and footwork than fighting. Neither man appeared willing to take as many risks as they did the first time, and there were periodic spells of booing from the crowd. True, the intensity increased the second half, but while their first encounter flirted with genuine greatness, the return bout would have been considered a bit of a bust if it wasn't for the storyline and the fighters involved.

Should Bob Arum be disciplined for his outrageous comments?

Even though he's been backpedaling quicker than Morrade Hakkar in the opening round against Bernard Hopkins, Arum should not be allowed to escape unpunished. His irresponsible statements immediately after the fight and over the next few days did serious damage to the sport's credibility and cast false aspersion on Homansky and other members of the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

Everybody says things they regret during times of great stress, but Arum certainly had time to calm down before claiming, two days after the fight, that Homansky had plotted to rig the judging pool. While the NSAC will decide what actions to take in that regard, who is going to give back to Mosley the glory Arum and De La Hoya tried to rob with their postfight diatribes?

In the process of dumping on Mosley and the judges, Arum has soiled his own nest. Now he has to sleep in it.

What does De La Hoya's loss mean to the boxing industry?

Financially, the second Mosley-De la Hoya fight exceeded all expectations. The MGM Grand Garden Arena was sold out well in advance of the fight, with 16,268 spectators generating a live gave in excess of $11-million. It was such a hot ticket that scalpers were reportedly charging 10 times the face value, which, if true, means that some ringside seats sold for as much as $12,000 each!

To accommodate the overflow, an additional 30,000 closed-circuit tickets were sold at various Las Vegas venues at $50 per pop. Of course, the really big money came from the pay-per-view that was sold to approximately 1 million homes, generating more than $50-million.

With all due respect to Mosley, it was

De La Hoya who was mainly responsible for the fight's remarkable success, and if The Golden Boy follows through with his pre-fight promise to retire if he lost, it will be a crushing blow to an industry badly in need of superstars. If, on the other hand, De La Hoya decides to fight on, he will continue to be the sport's biggest non-heavyweight draw.

Will there be a third fight?

Let's hope so. Even though the second fight wasn't as good as the first, the best way to settle the dispute would be to do it one more time. Mosley has already indicated he'd be in favor of it, which makes a lot of sense, as there is no other fight that would pay him as much.

"If he wants to do it again, it's all right with me," Mosley told the Associated Press. "As long as the money is right, that is."

Basically, it's all up to De La Hoya. He can sulk off into the sunset, or do what real fighters do—fight. The guess here is that after much vacillation, many contradictory statements, and much posturing, he'll fight Mosley again. Beneath his handsome face, and despite his churlish behavior in the aftermath of his third pro defeat, De La Hoya is a warrior. He won't want the final memory of his boxing career to be one of him whining about a close decision.

Who's out there for Mosley if De La Hoya retires or decides to fight somebody else?

Mosley's options are considerably greater now than when he beat De La Hoya in 2000. Back then, the only big-money fight would have been a rematch with De La Hoya. Mosley would have been delighted to fight him again right away, but Arum did not want to pay Mosley the $10-million called for in the original contract. This time Mosley has more flexibility.

A match with Fernando Vargas would be a blockbuster, as would a fight with the game's reigning madman, welterweight champion Ricardo Mayorga, providing, of course, "El Matador" gets past IBF titleholder Cory Spinks in December. Mosley could also give Winky Wright a much-deserved shot, which is something De La Hoya was never going to do. That would satisfy the purists, but the financial reward wouldn't be anywhere near as enticing as matches with Vargas or Mayorga. Regardless of what Sugar Shane does next, life is bound to be much sweeter than it has been since January 2002, when Vernon Forrest ruined his unbeaten record and knocked the frosting off his nickname.

What does this fight do for each fighter's legacy?

Even though Mosley's victory didn't exactly erase his two losses to Forrest, it pushed them into the background. Under the you're-only-as-good-as-your-last-fight philosophy that governs boxing, two wins against De La Hoya trumps a pair of losses to Forrest. The 32-year-old Mosley, 39-2 (35), now has the opportunity to build on what he's already accomplished, and while nobody can be sure what the future holds,

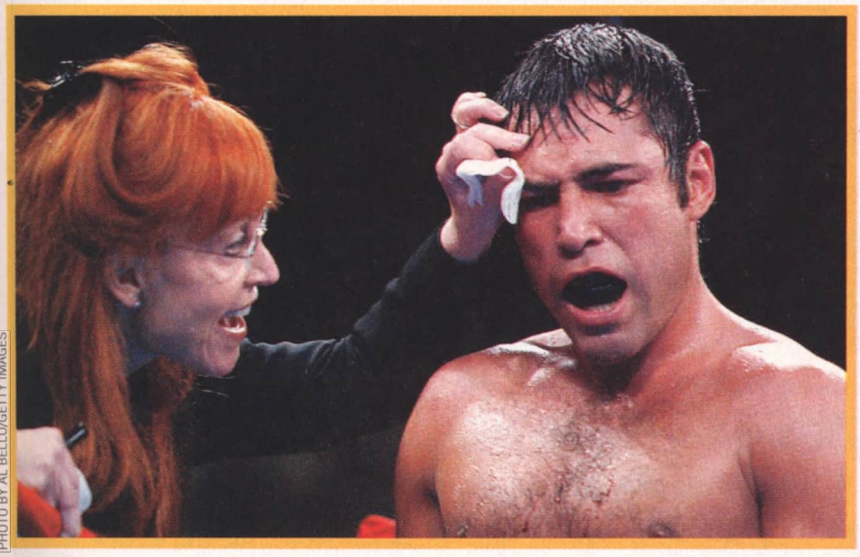
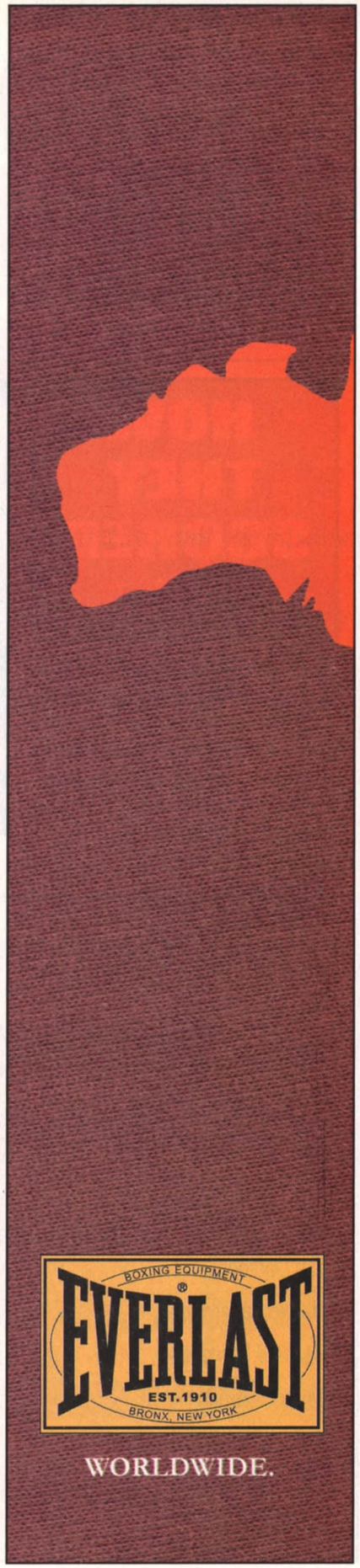


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Dr. Margaret Goodman examines the cut over De La Hoya's right eye that was opened by an unintentional clash of heads in the fourth round. The injury did not hamper Oscar unduly, but HBO's George Foreman claimed that the judges "scored the blood."



Sugar Shane has already proved that he's one of the very best fighters of his era and a very strong candidate for the Hall of Fame. There's also every reason to believe he can accomplish more before he's done.

Even if he never wins another fight, De La Hoya has a lock on a plaque in Canastota, and that's as it should be. Besides everything he's done inside the ring, Oscar has been the best thing to happen to the Sweet Science since Sugar Ray Leonard retired. Sure, he acts like a spoiled brat from time to time, but other than the Felix Trinidad fight, he's always left everything he had in the ring, including the Mosley fights.

De La Hoya won a lot of new converts in his give-and-take brawl with Vargas, especially among members of the Mexican-American community who had been previously turned off by his pretty boy image and Beverly Hills lifestyle. If De La Hoya wants to keep that hard-earned constituency, one that had a lot to do with turning the second Mosley fight into such a monster at the box office, he had better try to reap his revenge with his fists, not by flexing his bankroll to finance an investigation. In fact, had he acted as macho after the fight as he did during it, it would have knocked some of the wind out of Arum's outburst and elevated Oscar in the minds of virtually everybody. Sadly, he took the low road and dragged the sport down with him. ■

HOW THEY SCORED IT

Two-way action creates differences of opinion

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Although the three official judges all turned in identical 115-113 tallies in Shane Mosley's favor, there was a wide diversity of scores among various members of the media. Here's a representative sample:

NAME	AFFILIATION	SCORE
Nigel Collins	THE RING	117-113, Mosley
Joe Santoliquito	THE RING	117-111, De La Hoya
Ivan Goldman	*KO*	115-113, Mosley
Kevin Iole	*Las Vegas Review-Journal*	116-112, De La Hoya
Royce Feour	*Las Vegas Review-Journal*	115-113, Mosley
Michael Rosenthal	*L.A. Daily News*	115-113, De La Hoya
Steve Springer	*Los Angeles Times*	115-114, Mosley
Dan Rafael	*USA Today*	115-113, De La Hoya
Tim Dahlberg	Associated Press	116-113, Mosley
Harold Lederman	HBO	115-113, De La Hoya
Bernard Fernandez	*Philadelphia Daily News*	117-112, Mosley
Doug Krikorian	*Long Beach Press-Telegram*	117-113, Mosley
Steve Kim	MaxBoxing.com	116-112, Mosley
Max Kellerman	ESPN	116-112, Mosley
Joe Tessitore	ESPN	117-111, De La Hoya

THE BEST OF EVERYTHING—IN EVERY DIVISION

By William Dettloff

A fighter is only as good as his weapons. If he has a poor jab or a weak right hand, or if he can't go to the body or throw a decent hook, his chances for success are diminished. If he can't take a good one on the chin or last more than a few rounds without blowing wind, or if can't take two steps sideways without tripping over his feet, he's going to get beaten up a lot by guys with better weapons or, at the least, more of them. It's a tough exercise. It requires a lot of weapons. The more one has the better. If it's not a weapon, it's a liability.

Logic would dictate, then, that the guys with the most weapons are the best fighters. In this feature, THE RING explores that logic and analyzes and selects the best weapons in the game today, division by division. We've included pretty much every weapon that matters: jab, hook, uppercut, bodypunching, right hand, hand speed, ring generalship, combinations, defense, chin, stamina, heart, and footwork. We ask and then answer the question: Who has the best right hand at heavyweight? Who's the best 140-pound bodypuncher? Who has the most heart at 126, and the fastest hands at 112?

As you might expect, not all of the divisions shake out in the same way. In weight classes with virtual parity, that feature no especially dominant fighter or where the class is especially deep, there are fewer multi-category winners. The talent is spread around. Conversely, in fairly weak divisions that are headed up by a star or two, there is a concentration of significant individual talents, which is reflected, quite logically, in the selections.

One more note about weight divisions: For the purposes of this analysis, we combined the bantamweight and junior bantamweight divisions into one pool, and did the same with flyweight, junior flyweight, and strawweight. Quite simply, when you get down to these weight divisions, there just aren't enough fighters whom American fans are familiar with to do it any other way. Besides, a pound or two either way matters little—regardless of weight, the finest weapons reveal themselves. They have to. It can't be a weapon if nobody knows it's there.

Jab

Once he learned how to use it, **Lennox Lewis'** jab became one of the dominant heavyweight punches of the era. Try to picture him fending off Evander Holyfield or David Tua without it.

Left Hook

You didn't want to get hit with Joe Frazier's hook or with Gerry Cooney's, and you don't want to get hit with **David Tua's**. If it's not in the same league, it's darned close.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Evander Holyfield can't quite trap defensive master Byrd

Uppercut

We know he hasn't stopped anyone with it in a while, but isn't the punch the last thing to go? **Mike Tyson's** uppercut is still one of the most dangerous punches in the game.

Bodypuncher

If you can, forget what bodypunchers are supposed to look like and remember that **Chris Byrd** nearly dropped David Tua with a straight left to the ribs. And it wasn't an accident.

Right Hand

The single hardest punch of the current era is **Lennox Lewis'** right cross. We'll bet Hasim Rahman's head is still ringing.

Hand Speed

Floyd Patterson had fast hands for a heavyweight. So did Muhammad Ali. **Roy Jones** is faster than both of them.

Ring Generalship

John Ruiz will tell you: Even at heavyweight, **Roy Jones** controls every inch of the ring.

Combinations

A guy as big and heavy-handed as **Corrie Sanders** shouldn't be able to crank out combinations the way he does, but tell that to Wladimir Klitschko.

Defense

He may not practice the most crowd-pleasing style, but **Chris Byrd** is easily the slipperiest heavyweight since Jimmy Young. And he's a better fighter than Young was.

Chin

Forget the after-the-bell knockdown against Hasim Rahman—it was a balance shot. **David Tua's** whiskers are every bit as good as Ray Mercer's used to be, and that's saying something.

Stamina

Chris Byrd has gone the distance in nearly half his fights. Have you ever seen him winded?

Heart

If you put an elephant's heart in **Evander Holyfield's** chest, you wouldn't be able to tell the difference. It accounts more than anything else for his success.

Footwork

Without running or dancing or even a lot of moving around, **Roy Jones** does things with his feet that keep him just far enough away to keep from getting hit and just close enough to knock your teeth out.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Jones' speed allows him to command the ring against John Ruiz

Overall Analysis

Imagine that: Two small, light-hitting heavyweights—Jones and Byrd—edge out Lennox Lewis and David Tua, the big punchers. Jones and Byrd won three categories apiece, Lewis and Tua two each. Tell us again why there should be a super heavyweight division?

Jab

It was sufficient to keep him on top at 175 forever, and even now **Virgil Hill's** jab is enough to keep him in it against almost anyone. He'll have it for as long as he's above ground.

Left Hook

He's no powerpuncher, but **James Toney** knows when, where, and how to land the hook better than guys who hit twice as hard. It was the hook that broke down Vassiliy Jirov bit by bit.

Uppercut

It's not good to be within **Jean-Marc Mormeck's** punching range if you can help it. It's worse to be within range of his uppercut.

Bodypuncher

There is not a more dedicated bodypuncher in the game than **Vassiliy Jirov**. Paul Berlenbach would love this guy.

Right Hand

He's a little sloppy and too eager for the kayo a lot of the time, but if you had a right hand like **Wayne "Big Truck" Braithwaite**, you would be, too.

Hand Speed

Maybe he doesn't have the greatest chin, but **Ravea Springs** moves his hands faster than anyone in the division, including James Toney.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Alexander Gurov tries his best to avoid Mormeck's heavy uppercut

Ring Generalship

If you don't know quite how to define ring generalship, watch **James Toney** at work some time. It'll come to you pretty quickly.

Combinations

Over a 12-round fight, you can count probably on one hand the number of times **James Toney** throws a punch and doesn't come with two or three more right behind it.

Defense

Watch **James Toney** slip, duck, block, and parry blows, and you'll see how the great fighters did it a few generations ago. He's one of very few left that can pull it off.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Vassiliy Jirov can tell you Toney throws a wicked hook

Chin

How frustrating must it be when, after nine or 10 rounds, you finally hit **James Toney** cleanly on the chin with a good shot, and then you find out his chin is granite?

Stamina

If it takes 12 hard rounds to beat up a guy who needs a beating, you can bet **Jean-Marc Mormeck** will still be dishing out that beating at the last bell.

Heart

Sometimes it takes a soft chin to reveal a big heart. We got a look at **O'Neil Bell's** when he was hurt early by Arthur Williams and Kelvin Davis and beat both by late kayo anyway.

Footwork

The legs are 39 years old now, but they have enough spring left in them to motor **Virgil Hill** around when he needs them to. "Quicksilver" is almost always balanced on the balls of his feet.

Overall Analysis

Toney, who won five of the 13 categories, is clearly the number-one guy here. The sad part is, he's had the skills to be the world's best cruiserweight for about five years now.

Jab

A fast, long jab is a great weapon to have. When it comes from the wrong side, as it does when southpaw **Antonio Tarver** throws it, it's doubly effective.

Left Hook

Only **Roy Jones** can leap in with a hook from the other side of the ring and put a guy on his back. Ask Montell Griffin.

Uppercut

He's not the top guy in the division no matter what he says, but you don't want to be on the inside with him when **Dariusz Michalczewski** starts ripping uppercuts.

Bodypuncher

It's tempting to name Roy Jones here, but a consistent, withering body attack is a staple of every **Dariusz Michalczewski** fight. You can't say that about Jones.

Right Hand

Remember the second half of the one-two that **Roy Jones** used to floor Reggie Johnson? It was breathtaking. He doesn't throw it to knock guys out, but it's awesome anyway.

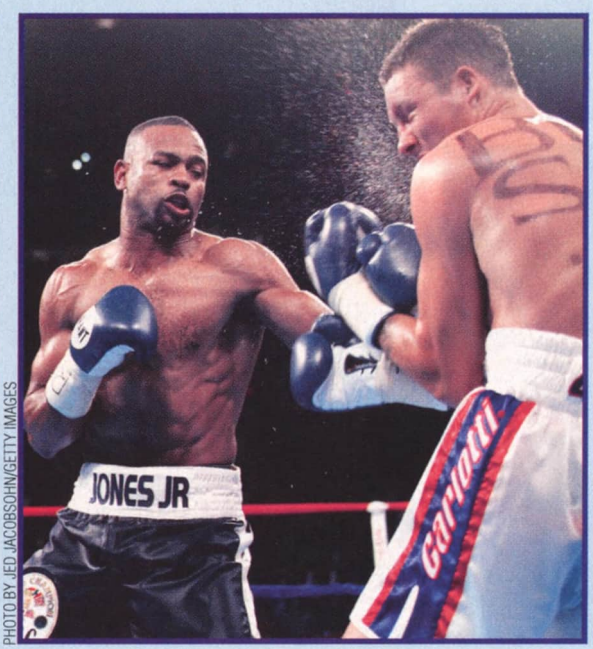


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Jones' lightning left hook tattoos Clinton Woods

PHOTO BY JAMIE SQUIRE/GETTY IMAGES

Tarver backs off Berry Butler with his long jab

Hand Speed

He's not just the fastest light heavyweight today; **Roy Jones** is the fastest light heavyweight ever. Period.

Ring Generalship

If you can name more than a handful of rounds **Roy Jones** has lost in his six-year, 15-fight light heavyweight career, you know something we don't. Other guys can only do in there what he lets them do.

Combinations

Call him boring if you like. But on the rare occasion when **Roy Jones** sits down and punches in combination, it is unlike anything else you can see in the ring today.

Defense

While Montell Griffin may have merited consideration a few years ago, he's since slipped a bit. Meanwhile, **Roy Jones'** defensive reflexes remain as sharp as ever.

Chin

Dariusz Michalczewski has 48 wins—two of them over hard-punching Richard Hall in give-and-take slugfests—and a marginal defense. You do the math.

Stamina

Have you ever seen **Roy Jones** tired?

Heart

When a guy has been ripped off, overlooked, and overmatched as many times as **Glencoffe Johnson** has and he comes back to pull off an upset like the one over Eric Harding, there's no denying his ticker.

Footwork

Of all the things **Roy Jones** does right, his footwork isn't the most obvious or the most important. It's still the best in the class.

Overall Analysis

Just in case you'd forgotten—given his recent heavyweight dalliances—Jones, tops in eight of the 13 categories, is worlds better than the rest of the planet's 175-pounders.

Jab

You don't get to be as accomplished a boxer as **Sven Ottke** is without having a superb jab. It's no battering ram, but it does just what the textbook says a jab is supposed to do.

Left Hook

It's not even his best punch, but **Antwun Echols'** left hook is better than most of the right hands in the division. It's a cannon.

Uppercut

Some guys are natural born punchers. **Antwun Echols** is one, and his uppercut is the best one in the class, even if inside isn't his best game.

Bodypuncher

Still fast enough and still mechanically sound, **Charles Brewer**, though past his prime, rips the body with more gusto than anyone else at 168.

Right Hand

Anyone **Antwun Echols** can hit square with his poleax of a right hand, including Sven Ottke and Joe Calzaghe, can go.

Hand Speed

We generally don't think of flat-footed, aggressive Welsh guys as having fast hands, but when **Joe Calzaghe** gets going, his gloves are a blur. Ask Byron Mitchell.

Ring Generalship

How do you think **Sven Ottke** keeps sending all these guys home with decision losses? It's not all home cooking.

Combinations

Clearly one of **Joe Calzaghe's** greatest strengths is his loathing of a slow pace. If it were up to him, you would get penalized for throwing less than a hundred punches a round.

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Calzaghe's quick combinations rain down on Tocker Pudwill

Defense

With six knockouts in 31 wins, you know **Sven Ottke** isn't overpowering anybody. So how does he keep winning? Defense is a big part of it.

Chin

Omar Sheika has a negligible defense and a record spotted with stoppage losses to top guys, but they've all been from cuts or swellings. Whether or not he ever wins a title, Sheika's chin is noteworthy.

Stamina

Slow and steady wins the race. If title fights were 40 rounds long, **Eric Lucas** would be a superstar.

Heart

Let's admit it: **Charles Brewer** doesn't have the greatest chin in the division. It's fortunate for him, then, that he owns the biggest heart.

Footwork

If you don't like a lot of movement, you wouldn't find **Sven Ottke's** in-and-out, in-and-out style very entertaining. But no one does it better, and they eat it up in Germany.

Overall Analysis

It's interesting that the division's best boxer, Ottke, won four categories, and its best puncher, Echols, won three, while Calzaghe, who won only two, might be better overall than either of them.

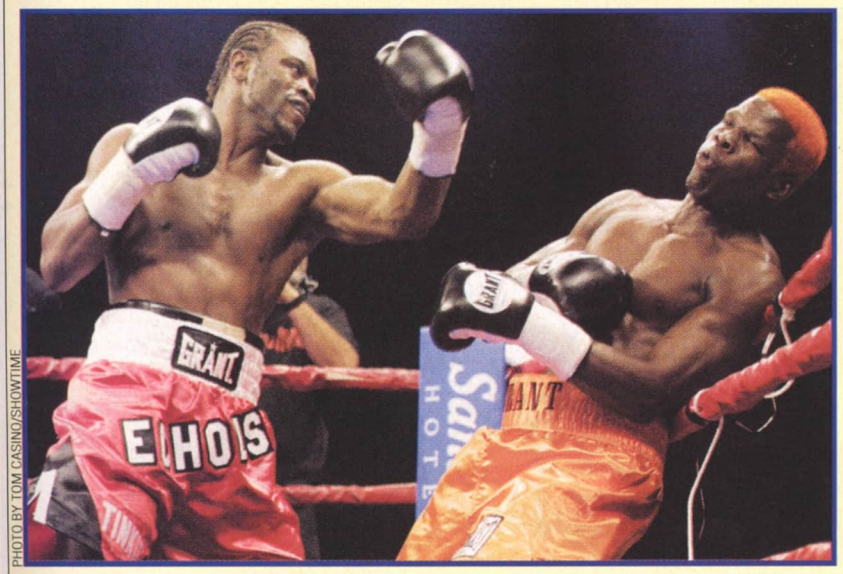


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

The heavy-handed Echols rocks Richard Grant with a left

Jab

Tough guys aren't supposed to be able to control a fight with just the jab, but **Bernard Hopkins** has been doing just that for years.

Left Hook

Okay, so he can't throw it from the other side of the ring and get away with it like a certain fellow pound-for-pounder can. But **Bernard Hopkins'** hook is 100 percent Philadelphia.

Uppercut

He can do it inside or outside, and when **Bernard Hopkins** is inside, the uppercut is the punch to watch for. Body or head, it doesn't matter.

Bodypuncher

How could a guy as schooled and rounded as **Bernard Hopkins** not be an excellent bodypuncher? Next time he gets a runner, watch the man work downstairs.

Right Hand

He doesn't blow guys out of the ring with it, but **Jermain Taylor's** right hand is one of the most beautifully thrown punches in the class, even if it's not good enough yet for him to take on Bernard Hopkins.

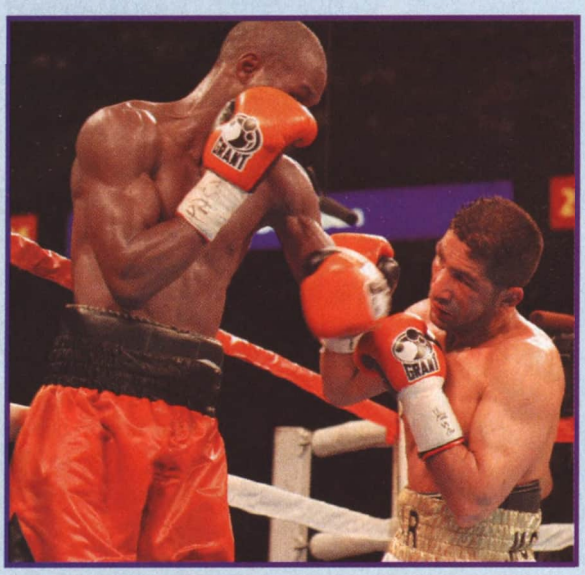


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Hopkins' multiple gifts prove way too much for Morrade Hakkar

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Joe Garcia soaks up young Taylor's money punch

Hand Speed

If **William Joppy** has one advantage over Bernard Hopkins, it's his hand speed. Whether that means he can beat Hopkins is another story.

Ring Generalship

You couldn't ask for a better display of ring generalship than **Bernard Hopkins'** calm dissection of bomb-throwing Felix Trinidad.

Combinations

If you don't know yet what happens to guys in Philadelphia gyms who throw one punch at a time, **Bernard Hopkins** will be glad to fill you in. Here's a hint: They needn't bother renting a locker.

Defense

He talks like a street-fighter, but in reality **Bernard Hopkins** has the best defensive moves of any middleweight of the last 10 years. Try to think of the last time you saw him to take a good, hard flush shot right on the jaw. It just doesn't happen much.

Chin

Bernard Hopkins beat powerpunching Antwun Echols twice over 22 rounds and never appeared seriously hurt. That's a chin.

Stamina

Just under one-third of **Bernard Hopkins'** 31 knockouts have come in the seventh round or later. Five have come in the 10th round or later. He has wind.

Heart

You got the sense that as long as there was still a circuit or two firing haphazardly somewhere in the recesses of **William Joppy's** skull, he would have kept getting up against Felix Trinidad.

Footwork

Ask Felix Trinidad some time why he couldn't land the hook against **Bernard Hopkins**. It was no accident.

Overall Analysis

It says something about the lack of talent in the division, but it also says something about Hopkins that he took 10 of 13 categories. Unfortunately, if we had a category for biggest knucklehead, Hopkins would have won that, too.

Jab

When he wants to use it, **Oscar De La Hoya's** jab is one of the best in the business. Ask Felix Trinidad.

Left Hook

It's not the bomb Felix Trinidad's hook was, but **Oscar De La Hoya's** hook is almost as effective. It's his best punch, and when he scores a knockout, it's almost always the hook that's responsible.

Uppercut

Southpaws aren't known to be especially good at throwing the uppercut, but then, **Winky Wright** is better than your average southpaw fighter.

Bodypuncher

Not every good bodypuncher is a bob-and-weave, wide-hook kind of fighter. **Fernando Vargas** breaks guys down with short, hard bodypunches, carefully chosen and precisely thrown.

Right Hand

There is not a better, straighter, more perfectly delivered right cross in the division than the one **Fernando Vargas** throws right down the pipe. It's a laser.

Vargas' heart lifts him off the canvas every time

Hand Speed

Even if he's not as fast as he was at 135 or 147, no one at 154 comes close to rivaling **Shane Mosley's** hand speed.

Ring Generalship

You can make a good case that what made the difference in **Oscar De La Hoya's** victory over Fernando Vargas was De La Hoya's later-round control of the fight's choreography—the definition of ring generalship.

Combinations

In a division with a good number of excellent combination punchers, **Oscar De La Hoya's** practiced, educated, jarring salvos stand out as the best. He didn't break down Fernando Vargas one punch at a time.

Defense

After two fights spent trying in vain to nail **Winky Wright** with a clean one on the jaw, who could blame Bronco McKart for going a little crazy in the third match?

Chin

Look at the fighters **Oscar De La Hoya** has faced over his career, note that he's never been stopped or even in danger of being stopped, and then try to think of a better chin at 154.

Stamina

There can be few things more exhausting than firing misses at Winky Wright all night, but **J.C. Candelo** never even took a deep breath. He could go for a long, long time.

Heart

In the dictionary under "Heart," there should be a picture of **Fernando Vargas** getting out of the first round against Felix Trinidad.

Footwork

It's not just his hand speed that enables **Shane Mosley** to land the way he does; it's what his feet do to put him in position.

Overall Analysis

Who would have thought nine years and 24 pounds ago that today De La Hoya would be the best junior middle in the world? Vargas won three categories, Mosley and Wright two apiece, but Oscar trumped them all with five.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Yory Boy Campas knows Oscar's jab is the best at 154

Jab

Remember that it was primarily **Vernon Forrest's** jab that kept Shane Mosley at bay in both of their fights. It's one of the best in the game.

Left Hook

It might qualify as more of a round-house left, but either way, **Ricardo Mayorga's** hook is a club. Get inside it or outside it, but don't get in its way.

Uppercut

We think Shane Mosley would agree that **Vernon Forrest's** uppercut is a howitzer. Mosley's neck is probably still stiff.

Bodypuncher

He's not as flashy or as charismatic as some other guys in the division, but **Antonio Margarito** is a hellacious bodypuncher. Ask Antonio Diaz.

Right Hand

Okay, so maybe **Ricardo Mayorga** doesn't throw a classic, straight, from-the-shoulder right hand. But that didn't help "Six Heads" Lewis or Vernon Forrest.

Hand Speed

Uncle Michael got the slow-twitch fibers. Daddy Leon got medium. The fast-twitch fibers went to quick-fisted **Cory Spinks**.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Margarito's stamina helps him get the better of Antonio Diaz

Ring Generalship

It's defined best as controlling the movement of your opponent, controlling what happens in the ring, and no one said it has to be pretty. **Ricardo Mayorga** does it better than anyone at 147.

Combinations

Fighters don't come better schooled these days than **Vernon Forrest**, who hardly ever throws one punch at a time.

Defense

You can catch **Cory Spinks** with a good single shot if you're lucky, and with two in a row if he's still on his stool. Other than that, get ready for a long night.

Chin

The stuff **Ricardo Mayorga** walked through in his two fights with Vernon Forrest might have decapitated most other welterweights, and a fair amount of middleweights, too.

Stamina

The **Antonio Margarito** you see punching non-stop in the first round is the same one you'll see punching non-stop in the last round. Without a huge punch or crippling speed, it's his strongest ally.

Heart

He's not the best or most talented welterweight there is, but you cannot sleep on **Manuel Gomez**. He has too much inside. Ask Kofi Jantuah, who was way ahead when Gomez leveled him in the 10th.

Footwork

If you can't hit very hard, you'd better be able to hit and then use your legs to get the hell out of the way. At least, that's how **Cory Spinks** does it.

Overall Analysis

We don't know how long it will last, but right now Mayorga is the man at 147. Just as in his second fight with Forrest, he edged out his rival here, by a 4-3 tally.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Mayorga's chin and Forrest's uppercut are both on display

Jab

If **Paul Spadafora** didn't have the jab he does, he'd probably be pumping gas somewhere in Pittsburgh. It's a very good jab.

Left Hook

You might think it's a little early for this, but we don't need to see **Miguel Cotto** against the junior welterweight elite to know that his left hook is Trinidad-esque.

Uppercut

The only thing worse than being on the outside and open for **Kostya Tszyu's** right is to be inside and open for his uppercut.

Bodypuncher

The normally durable Rocky Martinez will not be the last guy **Miguel Cotto** breaks in half with a bodyshot.

Right Hand

You can argue all you want that the fight shouldn't have been stopped, but it remains that **Kostya Tszyu** floored Zab Judah twice with one right hand.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Mitchell's quick combos helped him win rounds against Tszyu

Hand Speed

Take away his hand speed, and **Zab Judah** is completely ordinary. With it, he's one of the two or three top guys in the best class in boxing.

Ring Generalship

How can **Kostya Tszyu**, the guy who bludgeons one challenger after another, be the same guy who orchestrated that beautiful ballet against Ben Tackie? Ring generalship.

Combinations

When you've been around against top guys as long as **Sharmba Mitchell** has, you know that one punch at a time doesn't do it. So he puts 'em together.

Defense

Picture a guy who's very fast, instinctively defensive, well-schooled, and a southpaw no less, and you have **Sharmba Mitchell**.

Chin

When Kostya Tszyu tries to stop a guy, he usually does. He tried as hard as he could to stop **Oktay Urkal**. He didn't come close.

Stamina

He doesn't start fast like he used to, but the tradeoff is that when the other guy is starting to tire, **Kostya Tszyu** is just warming up. Then things get interesting.

Heart

It goes without saying, but we have to say it anyway: You'll never see an athlete with a heart bigger than **Arturo Gatti's**.

Footwork

Maybe he doesn't have enough pop in his gloves to threaten the top dogs, but what **Omar Weis** can do with his feet makes him a tough assignment for anybody.

Overall Analysis

If you haven't figured out yet that Tszyu, who won four categories, is the class of the best division in the game, you haven't been watching very closely. Don't say later that nobody told you.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Tszyu's bludgeoning right hand scores against James Leija

Jab

You get the sense that **Floyd Mayweather** could whip a fair number of lightweights with just his jab. It's the cornerstone of his offense.

Left Hook

In a class currently comprised mostly of boxers and pressure fighters, **Jose Luis Castillo's** left hook marks him as one of the division's best powerhitters.

Uppercut

If the well-traveled **Juan Lazcano** is going to do anything big at 135, he'll need the help of his uppercut, which is probably his best weapon.

Bodypuncher

A lot of guys felt the body work alone should have gotten **Jose Luis Castillo** the decision in his first fight with Floyd Mayweather. It was impressive.

Right Hand

We've never seen Paul Spadafora hurt as badly as when **Victoriano Sosa** nailed him with the straight right. There's not a more dangerous single punch in the division.

PHOTO BY STEVE MANTEO/HBO

Most people thought the well-conditioned Dorin outfought Paul Spadafora

Hand Speed

It's not just the mechanics that make **Floyd Mayweather** special; it's the speed too. When he can let his hands loose, they're a blur. Ask Diego Corrales.

Ring Generalship

With not a lot of power and good but not blazing speed, **Steve Johnston** does what he does largely with desire and ring generalship. If only he did it more often.

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather's jab and fast feet prevailed against Jose Luis Castillo

Combinations

Take away **Leonard Dorin's** ability to throw punches in what in effect is one three-minute-long combination per round, and what's left is just a stubby guy with a good chin.

Defense

If you turn on the fights and see a guy slipping, dodging, and blocking all manner of punches, and in doing so looking not unlike a miniature James Toney, it's **Floyd Mayweather**.

Chin

Why wasn't Emanuel Burton-**Leonard Dorin** as exciting as Emanuel Burton-Micky Ward? Because Burton hurt Ward—he couldn't hurt Dorin.

Stamina

If his brutal slugfest with Paul Spadafora didn't tire **Leonard Dorin**, we can't imagine what might. If not for the myriad bruises and cuts, he might have gone another 15 rounds. And then he'd get his second wind.

Heart

He never had the talent to beat the very best, but **Angel Manfredy's** heart kept him trying for years. The way he kept looking for ways to score when totally overmatched against Diego Corrales was inspiring.

Footwork

He'd be a lot more exciting if not for what he can do with his feet, but you can't blame **Floyd Mayweather** for wanting to get out of the way when he can.

Overall Analysis

Mayweather isn't as dominant at lightweight as he was at junior light, but his wins in four categories still establish him as the best in the division. Next is Dorin, with three nods. Anyone else want to see the two of them fight?

Jab

If there is one thing **Joel Casamayor** learned during those hundreds of amateur victories, it's the importance of a good jab. It turned things around against upstart Nate Campbell.

Left Hook

If you saw the left that **Diego Corrales** used to flatten Damien Fuller in June, you know "Chico" has the best hook in the division, and no one comes close.

Uppercut

Remember the uppercuts **Diego Corrales** used to all but decapitate Roberto Garcia and Angel Manfredy? He's the best 130-pound puncher in years.

Bodypuncher

Maybe it's something about the last name. Either way, **Jesus Chavez** is becoming one of the top four or five bodypunchers in the business, and if you don't believe us, ask Sirimongkol Singmanassak or Carlos Gerena.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ndou's speed and combination punching were too much for Yoni Vargas

Right Hand

If **Acelino Freitas** didn't have all hell balled up in his right fist, he'd be a former beltholder right now and all of Argentina would be celebrating the start of Jorge Barrios' title reign.

Hand Speed

A powerpuncher like **Phillip Ndou** shouldn't be allowed to have hands as fast as he does, but they haven't been able to come up with a rule against it, so there you go.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Casamayor keeps his distance from Radford Beasley with his jab and footwork

Ring Generalship

If you want to see a reasonable impression of Steve Johnston, check out **Steve Forbes**, whose command of the ring makes up for his lack of pop.

Combinations

We're not sure **Phillip Ndou** takes a deep breath between punches, never mind a good long pause.

Defense

He continues to be underrated because he lacks a big punch, but **Steve Forbes'** defense will keep him competitive with any junior lightweight in the world.

Chin

Even if you think **Joel Casamayor** lost legitimately to Acelino Freitas, remember that Freitas' best right hands never gave Casamayor a moment's pause.

Stamina

The next time we see **Phillip Ndou** tired in a fight, it'll be the first time. His 12-rounder with Cassius Baloyi was fought at a heckuva pace.

Heart

You could see it way back when Genaro Hernandez beat him that **Carlos Hernandez** had loads of heart. And he was finding a way to give Floyd Mayweather a tough fight even before "Pretty Boy" injured his hand.

Footwork

If **Joel Casamayor** has beaten Diego Corrales by the time you read this, it'll be because Casamayor outmaneuvered him with his feet, just the way Floyd Mayweather did.

Overall Analysis

See how things work out? Casamayor and Ndou may or may not be the best fighters in the division, but certainly they're the most well-rounded, with three wins apiece. Seven different fighters got wins here, illustrating the parity and depth at 130.

Jab

Consider: **Marco Antonio Barrera** beat Johnny Tapia to a bloody pulp with, essentially, the jab. It might be the best at feather since Salvador Sanchez'.

Left Hook

He's not in puncher mode much anymore these days, but when he is, and when he wants to get his man out of there, **Marco Antonio Barrera's** left hook, to the head or body, is one of the dominant punches at featherweight.

Uppercut

It was ridiculous how easily **Erik Morales** landed the uppercut on Paulie Ayala. It was equally as ridiculous that Ayala took them all without disintegrating.

Bodypuncher

When he throws the hook to the body, it's creepy how much **Marco Antonio Barrera** looks like Julio Cesar Chavez.

Right Hand

If there's a punch at 126 that's harder than Marco Antonio Barrera's hook, it's **Erik Morales'** cannon blast of a right hand. When it lands cleanly, most guys go.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Stamina king Medina outhustles fellow busy bee Johnny Tapia

Hand Speed

We don't get to see it too often, but when we do it's obvious that **Derrick Gainer** has the fastest hands at 126, and not too many guys come close.

Ring Generalship

It goes against the laws of nature that a guy who fought his first 50 fights as a banger is able to control the ring now the way **Marco Antonio Barrera** does. It's legitimately brilliant.

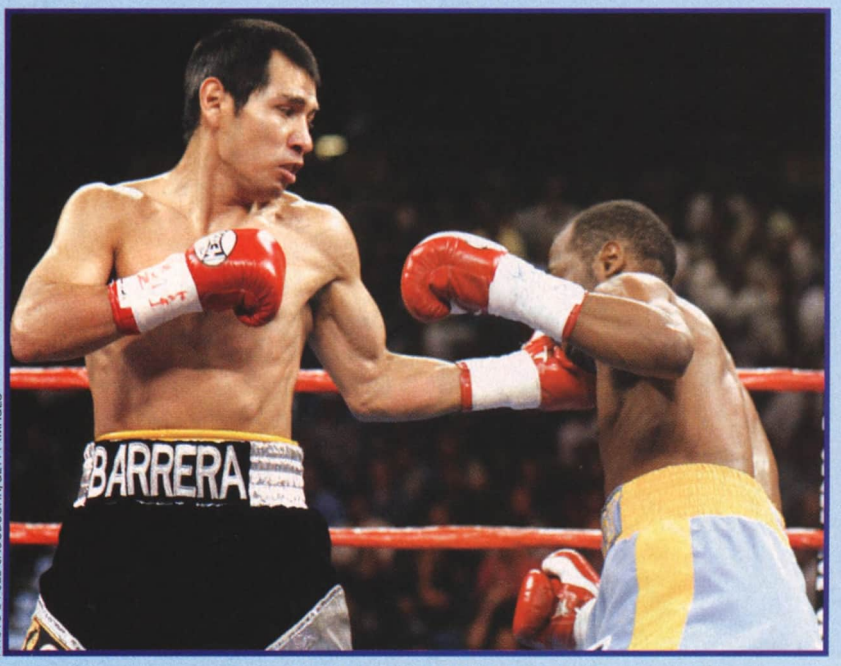


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Barrera's quick hook finds Kevin Kelley's chin

Combinations

If **Juan Manuel Marquez** can lick Marco Antonio Barrera or Erik Morales, it'll be because he throws the most picturesque, technically sound combinations in the division.

Defense

It may be that **Zahir Raheem** doesn't have the special stuff he'll need to get to the very top of a ridiculously talented division. If he does, it'll be largely because of his defense.

Chin

Forget about the drubbing by Scott Harrison. If you want to see **Wayne McCullough's** iron chin in action, get a tape of his October 1999 loss to Erik Morales. It's humbling.

Stamina

You get the feeling that if title fights were changed to 30 rounds, **Manuel Medina** would give a little shrug then go out and box 30 rounds, throwing 100 punches in each. No big deal.

Heart

It's hard to say how much **Johnny Tapia** has left. If he has anything, it's what's beating in his chest.

Footwork

Every time we think he's through, there's **Manuel Medina** again, literally boxing rings around some kid who's embarrassed because he thought Medina was washed-up. The guy knows what to do on his feet.

Overall Analysis

Someday you'll be able to tell your kids that you were around when Marco Antonio Barrera ruled the featherweights. With four categories to his credit, he doesn't need any silly alphabet belts to know he's the champ.

Jab

There's no way **Paulie Ayala** could have done what he did to Bones Adams in their two entertaining fights if he didn't have that superb southpaw jab.

Left Hook

It's probably not even his best punch, but **Oscar Larios** throws a hell of a left hook. Ask Willie Jorrin.

Uppercut

If not for the uppercuts **Manny Pacquiao** kept banging home, Emmanuel Lucero might still be running around in that ridiculous crouch.

Bodypuncher

A lot of big punchers fall in love with the ringing headshot. Not **Manny Pacquiao**, who digs to the body like nobody's business.

Right Hand

They don't call **Joan Guzman** "Little Tyson" for nothing. He may bang harder with his right than southpaw Manny Pacquaio does with his left. He's a terrifying hitter.

Hand Speed

It wasn't all smart matchmaking that got **Willie Jorrin** to an alphabet title.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Larios' stamina was a key to his 12th-round kayo of Israel Vazquez

It's his good, fast hands that separate him from lower-echelon junior feathers.

Ring Generalship

You won't find a guy who is more calm and in control in the ring than **Paulie Ayala**. Even the mayhem of the two Johnny Tapia fights couldn't shake him.

Combinations

When **Paulie Ayala** throws that double right hook and follows it with a straight left and then more hooks, he's awfully hard to beat. When he's on, he is the quintessential combination puncher.

Defense

Remember a couple of years ago when **Jose Luis Valbuena** pretty much shut down Marco Antonio Barrera's offense and took him the full route? Not many guys have been able to do that.

Chin

If you have any doubts about the worthiness of **Paulie Ayala's** beard, we recommend you watch a tape of the 12-round beating he took from power-punching featherweight Erik Morales.

Stamina

Since October 1999, the average **Oscar Larios** fight has gone 9.4 rounds. He's scored two 12th-round knockouts, another in the 10th, and has gone the distance eight times, winning seven. That's good enough for us.

Heart

No one would have blamed **Paulie Ayala** if he'd quit halfway through his disastrous challenge of Erik Morales. But in the last round, he was still trying to make a fight of it.

Footwork

The angles **Paulie Ayala** gets on his opponents create the openings you see him exploit. His feet create the angles.

Overall Analysis

Seems odd, doesn't it, that the last time we saw Ayala he was getting his head handed to him, yet here he is all over the place, winning six of 13 categories. Just goes to show how much better off he is at junior feather than at featherweight.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

The versatile Ayala is in command in his rematch with Bones Adams

Jab

He may be just past his prime or he may not be, but so far as we can tell, **Tim Austin's** jab is still an excellent weapon. We don't think he missed a single one against Adan Vargas.

Left Hook

If you saw **Alexander Munoz'** five-knockdown, title-winning bludgeoning of Celes Kobayashi in March 2002, you know his hook is a piledriver. It's been the key punch in building his 23-0 (23) record.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Perez kept up an awesome pace in beating Felix Machado

Uppercut

Although laying outside against **Veerapol Sahaprom** is no picnic, going inside, where he can get you with the uppercut, can be disastrous.

Bodypuncher

Like his big brother, **Rafael Marquez** doesn't neglect the body. His hook downstairs is among the most debilitating blows in the class.

Right Hand

Remember, Tim Austin was more or less controlling **Rafael Marquez** until Marquez landed a big right hand. Mark Johnson didn't take it too well, either.

Hand Speed

He couldn't break a water balloon with his Sunday punch, but **Masamori Tokuyama's** hands are the fastest in the class. In a division full of little, fast guys, that's saying something.

Ring Generalship

He's not what he was a few years ago, but **Mark Johnson** knows his business well enough between the ropes to get it done against younger, fresher guys he has no business whipping. Right, Fernando Montiel?

Combinations

Nacho Beristain trains both Juan Manuel and **Rafael Marquez**, and both are among the best combination punchers in the game. Coincidence?

Defense

If you want to hit **Masamori Tokuyama** clean on the chin, try to get him on his way to the ring, or, in a pinch, during the referee's instructions. Other than that, you're pretty much out of luck.

Chin

He's fighting well above his best weight against the best guys around, and no one has yet stopped **Mauricio Pastrana**. We doubt anyone will.

Stamina

The pace at which **Luis Perez** fought while dethroning Felix Machado was sizzling. He never tired. We got winded watching him.

Heart

So what that it was six years ago that **Tim Austin** fought through the pain of a busted jaw to stop Mbulelo Botile? That kind of thing stays with you forever.

Footwork

He's no huge puncher, but **Johnny Bredahl** moves on his feet better than anyone between 115 and 118 pounds. Remember the fits he gave Paulie Ayala in their March 2000 title fight?

Overall Analysis

Back-to-back knockout wins over Austin and Johnson will do wonders for a guy's career. If Marquez can pull a hat trick—maybe against Sahaprom?—we'll know we're in the presence of fighting genius. He at least pulled a hat trick here, outdistancing the pack by winning three categories.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Tim Austin reels from Marquez' heavy right hand

Jab

Everything about **Eric Morel's** style screams that he needs an outstanding jab to do his job well. If you haven't noticed, he's doing very well.

Left Hook

He's so naturally heavy-handed that any punch **Rosendo Alvarez** throws is going to hurt. The hook hurts more than anything else.

Uppercut

What is it about **Bebis Mendoza** that gives Rosendo Alvarez such problems? Try those nifty little uppercuts he lands whenever he gets in close. Man, that must be annoying.

Bodypuncher

If **Rosendo Alvarez** likes you, he hits you on the head until you fall over. If you get on his nerves, he goes downstairs. It's better if he likes you.

Right Hand

The beating **Rosendo Alvarez** gave Pichit Siriwat, which consisted mostly of booming right hands, was among the most brutal we've seen at this weight.

Hand Speed

If his hands were as heavy as they are fast, 2000 Puerto Rican Olympian **Ivan Calderon** would be a 105-pound Earnie Shavers.

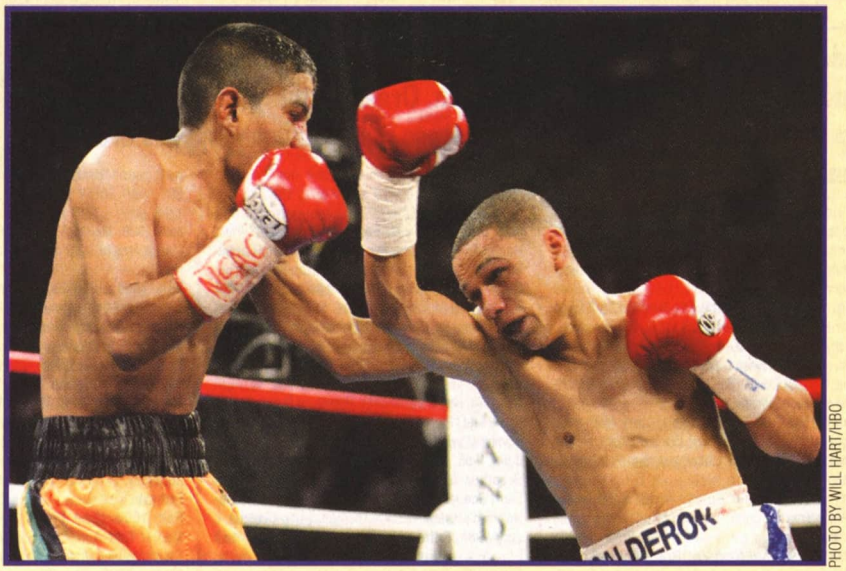


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Calderon's fast fists propel him to victory against Eduardo Marquez

Ring Generalship

Watching **Eric Morel** motor around and control the geography of the ring, usually fairly effortlessly, you get the sense he was on his toes, jabbing and moving, in the womb.

Combinations

If the way to beat a good, mobile boxer is to overwhelm him with an endless stream of powerful combinations, then Eric Morel should stay the hell away from **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Morel's defense leaves Denkaosaen Kaowichit swinging at air

Defense

He likes to stand and trade way more than is advisable, but when **Eric Morel** doesn't want to get hit, he doesn't get hit.

Chin

Over an 18-year, 80-fight career during which he's met the best little fighters in the world, **Melchor Cob-Castro** has never been stopped.

Stamina

Since scoring the quickest kayo in flyweight title history, back in April '02, **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam** has won three straight title fights over the 12-round distance, maintaining a busy workrate throughout each.

Heart

When a guy keeps fighting after three of his teeth are alternately punched and headbutted out of his mouth—as **Roberto Leyva** did during his terrific battle with Miguel Barrera in August 2002—we simply have no choice but to recognize him for it.

Footwork

Come on, "Little Hands Of Steel" is a terrible nickname for **Eric Morel**. It should be "Little Legs Of Gold" because his movement is what makes him what he is.

Overall Analysis

All right, we lost the chance for Morel to fight Ricardo Lopez when Lopez retired. Is it too much to ask Alvarez, who won three categories here, to step up and take on Morel, who edged him out with four wins? ■

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UPDATE

The RING

CHAMPIONSHIP POLICY

The Boxing Industry Needs An Attitude Adjustment

By Nigel Collins

While it's true that you find out who your real friends are when the going gets tough, sometimes you don't realize who the real enemy is until the battle begins. That's certainly been the case in THE RING's crusade to restore integrity to championship boxing that began with the announcement of our new championship policy in the April 2002 issue.

From the outset, it was a given that the alphabet organizations were Pugilistic Enemy Number One, and stripping them of their influence is still central to THE RING's goal. Even so, it didn't take long to realize that the struggle is a lot more complicated than a head-to-head confrontation with the alphabet cartels. A deeper understanding of the problem reveals that these nefarious groups are but a symptom of the disease that is killing boxing. The central problem is the culture of boxing as we find it in the third year of the 21st century, a culture where greed, self-interest, and laziness have overwhelmed the common good.

Sadly, the sport has not only permitted the alphabet gangs to get their claws on the cashbox, it's allowed them to contaminate its soul by brainwashing a generation into believing that things have to be this way.

Many in the boxing industry—fighters, managers, promoters, the media—have become institutionalized in much the same manner as prison inmates. But instead of being imprisoned by the walls of a penal institute, they've become trapped by their reluctance to act independently of the alphabet organizations.

Sure, damned near everybody complains about the alphabet gangs, but the only group that really seems to want meaningful reform are the people who pay for everything in the long run—the fans. They are joined by a handful of journalists who know the score and care enough to do more than just complain, but in some ways much of the media has become almost as big a problem as the so-called sanctioning bodies.

Hypocrisy is rampant throughout the game. Fighters, managers, and promoters alike flip flop depending on what best suits them at the time. If an alphabet group is trying to enforce a mandatory defense, the challenger and his camp will, naturally, be strongly in favor of it. If, however, that same fighter wins the title and later finds himself in the position of being forced to take a meaningless mandatory instead of a more lucrative bout with a noteworthy challenger, it's a different story. The fighter and his team will turn on the organization and the rules that gained them a crack at the title in the first place. This, of course, is one of the major flaws in the way the alphabet organizations operate. Their continual meddling in search of sanctioning fees is bound to create situations where fighters are pressured into matches that benefit neither their careers, bank accounts, nor the sport in general. THE RING, on the other hand, believes that forcing any fighter into any fight is counterproductive, and the surest way to ensure that the best fights are made is to allow the marketplace to decide. That way the consumers will have a product they want, and the shakedown tactics currently employed by the alphabet gangs will be rendered impotent.

Boxing's top-heavy economic structure certainly plays a major role, and it's not difficult to understand why minor fighters cling to alphabet straps. They believe they need every two-bit belt they can get their hands on in order to eke out a decent living. But why RING champions, most of who are near the top of the financial food chain, continue to voluntarily fork over massive sanctioning fees to the alphabet organizations is tougher to figure. At the very least they are costly examples of institutionalized thinking taken to a ridiculous extreme.

In some instances, it's the inability to see beyond recent history that prevents fighters from working toward a more

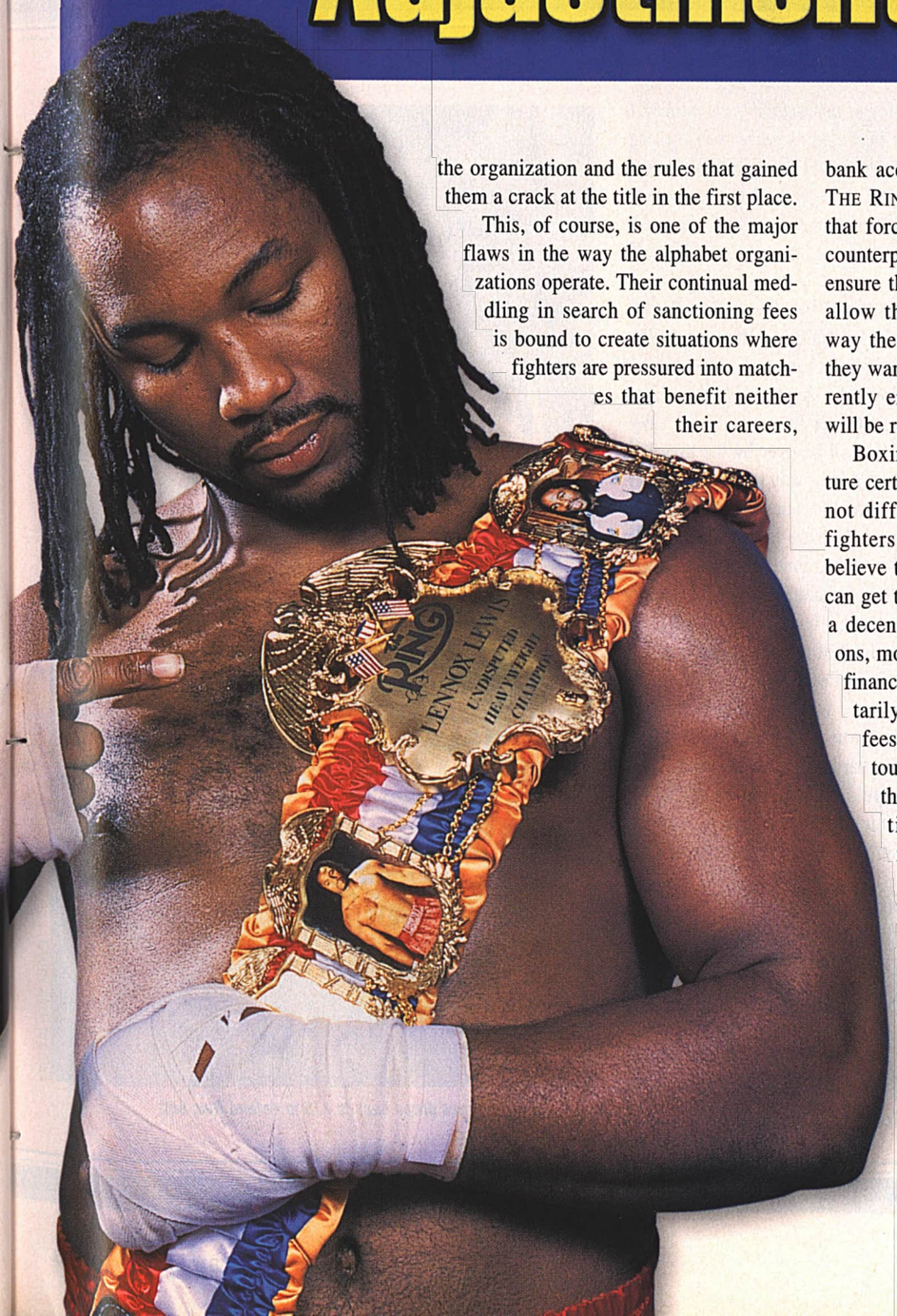


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Lennox Lewis points to the belt that is the only true indicator of a legitimate world champion. THE RING belt has made quite a comeback since Lewis received his strap for beating Evander Holyfield and unifying the title in November 1999.

progressive future. Take middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins for example. Although he's harshly criticized the alphabet groups at several Congressional hearings, Hopkins has failed to take a stand when it comes to the trio of alphabet belts he owns. That's because for years the only tangible thing he had going for him was the IBF title, which assured him of at least a couple of $100,000 paydays a year. Now he's the undisputed champion and one of the most recognizable fighters in the world, but he's been unable to shed his old mindset. Hopkins hangs on to his belts like a security blanket, when the truth of the situation is that *he's* the commodity being sold, not the belts.

The short span of a boxer's career is also a major issue. THE RING understands that it will take time for boxing to climb out of the hellhole it has dug for itself since the alphabet groups began to seriously infest the sport in the late-'60s. And while we're keen to help implement change as quickly as possible, we're in this fight for the long haul, regardless of how many years it takes. For fighters, however, time is a luxury they can't afford. They want theirs now, and most of them really don't care if the route they take further damages the sport.

What many fighters and their representatives fail to grasp, however, is that having one legitimate champion atop each weight class will strengthen the status of contenders as well as champions. There were no major belts on the line in the Arturo Gatti-Micky Ward trilogy, but that

CHECKING ON THE CHAMPS

The flipside to THE RING's policy of not stripping champions is that we will use these pages to nudge champions in a direction that will bring honor to both them and the game. Sometimes more than a gentle prod is needed, and we will not hesitate to chastise champions who abuse their positions. Here, then, is a brief division-by-division overview of the current status of RING champions:

Heavyweight: Despite what the WBA and IBF tell you, Lennox Lewis is still heavyweight champion of the world. That said, his one-fight-per-year schedule is hurting the sport. If Lewis doesn't want to be an active champion, he should retire.

Cruiserweight: Number-one contender James Toney's heavyweight bout with Evander Holyfield will be over by the time you read this, the result of which will go a long way toward determining who will be eligible to fill the current vacancy at 190 pounds.

Light Heavyweight: Roy Jones' decision to drop back down to 175 pounds to fight Antonio Tarver has vindicated THE RING's stance of retaining him as light heavy champion after his victory over John Ruiz for the WBA heavyweight bauble.

Super Middleweight: It's a sin Joe Calzaghe (number one) and Sven Ottke (number two) haven't fought each other yet, but unless a deal is made soon, we might have to wait until a new wave of contenders supplants them to crown a true champion at 168.

Middleweight: Like Lewis, Bernard Hopkins has not been as active as we would like, but there's no denying he's still the boss. "The Executioner" is scheduled to defend against number-one rated William Joppy in December in his toughest bout since Felix Trinidad.

Junior Middleweight: Former champ Oscar De La Hoya set an admirable standard by risking the title against dangerous Shane Mosley, so let's hope new champion Mosley follows his example and takes on worthy challengers. Certainly another fight with De La Hoya would fit the bill, as would a defense against Winky Wright.

Welterweight: Mayorga is showing that he's the sort of champion boxing needs by agreeing to fight IBF beltholder Cory Spinks, THE RING's number-three contender.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Jones drops back to 175 to defend RING belt

didn't stop fans from filling the venues or millions of TV viewers from tuning it. Nobody gave a hoot that no phony belts were at stake; all they wanted was to pay for the privilege of watching great action. That same philosophy will work throughout the sport if given a chance.

Despite numerous hurdles, THE RING's championship policy is making inroads where it counts the most—with the champions who wear our belt and the contenders who would like to. When Associate Editor Joe Santoliquito presented welterweight champion Ricardo Mayorga with THE RING belt the day before his rematch with Vernon Forrest, you'd have thought Mayorga had just been handed the secret to eternal life. Speaking through his attorney and interpreter, Tony Gonzalez, Mayorga said that he recognized that THE RING belt was "more important than the belts from the alphabet organizations" and that it legitimized him as the "real champion." In case you were wondering, "El Matador" was not chugging beer or smoking anything at the time.

It's not just recipients who relish THE RING belt. A few days after his career-saving upset over previously unbeaten Fernando Montiel, Mark Johnson approached a member of the editorial staff at a fight card in Philadelphia. Aware that there is a vacancy at the top of the 115-pound division, "Too Sharp" wanted to know if his victory over Montiel had entitled him to a RING championship belt. When informed that the win didn't meet our criterion for filling vacancies, Johnson, who earned a number-three

Junior Welterweight: Champion Kostya Tszyu has been legitimately idled with an injury, but is scheduled to defend against number-one contender Sharmba Mitchell once he's healed. You can't ask for more.

Lightweight: Floyd Mayweather is slated to meet talented Phillip Ndou in an intriguing and dangerous November defense. Props to "Pretty Boy" for continuing to take on the best.

Junior Lightweight: We're hoping the Joel Casamayor-Diego Corrales winner will square off with Acelino Freitas to fill the vacancy. Freitas-Jesus Chavez might also suffice.

Featherweight: In keeping with the true championship spirit, Marco Antonio Barrera is hoping to defend against Filipino slugger Manny Pacquiao in the sort of match fans salivate over. Good for him.

Junior Featherweight: Champion Paulie Ayala has not defended his RING belt since winning it in February 2002. In early-September he informed us that he had every intention of doing so, but has been unable to get a fight since losing to Erik Morales at 126 in November '02.

Bantamweight: Number-one contender Rafael Marquez needs to beat number two, Veerapol Sahaprom, or vice versa, to decide who is champ at 118.

Junior Bantamweight: It's a shame that leading contender Masamori Tokuyama never fights outside of Asia, which makes it difficult match him up with second-ranked Alexander Munoz or resurgent Mark Johnson (number three) in order to find a champion.

Flyweight: It looks like the lure of bigger money fights at heavier weights will draw Eric Morel out of the division before he has a chance to win THE RING 112-pound belt.

Junior Flyweight: As of press time, world champion Rosendo Alvarez hadn't fought since he won the vacant title in March '03. His manager, Gary Gittlesohn, blames promoter Don King.

Strawweight: The lack of a true champ is never a good situation, but do we really need this division?

—NC

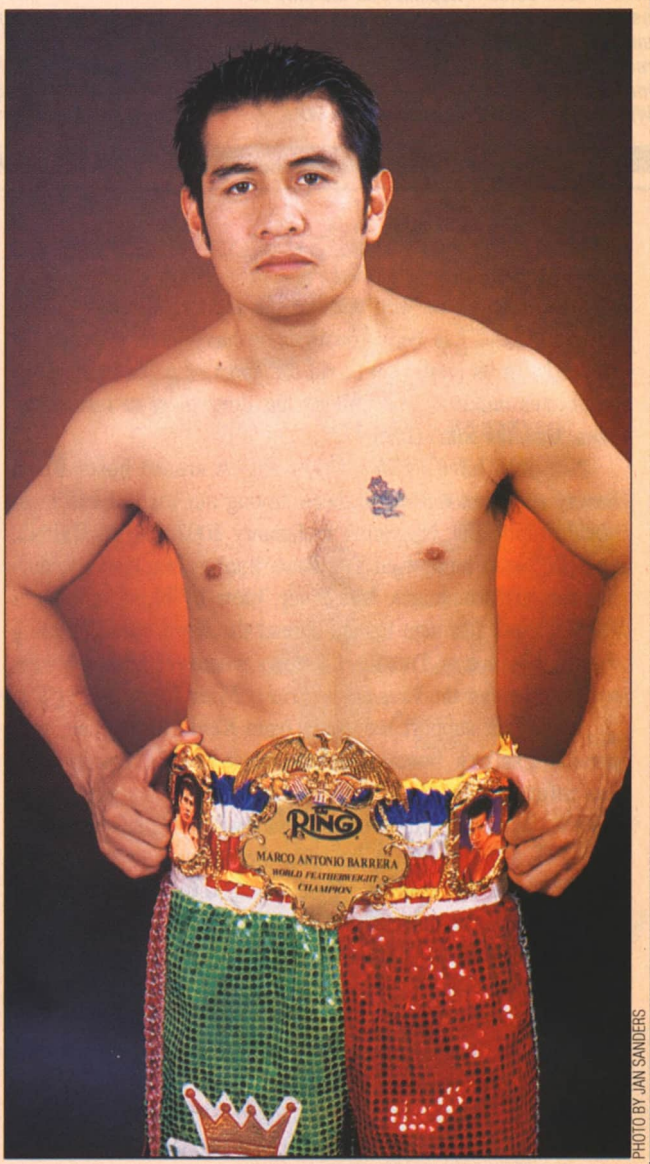


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Barrera seeks attractive defense versus Pacquiao

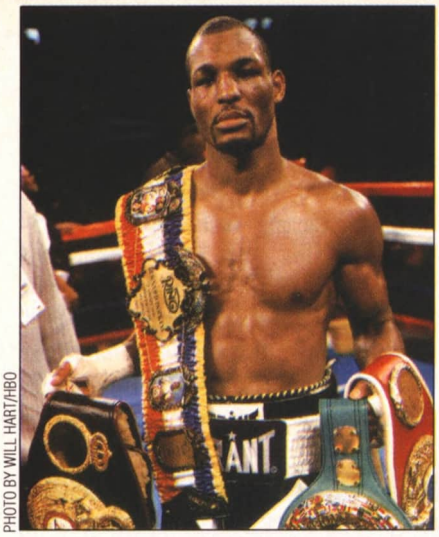


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Even though Bernard Hopkins has the only belt he really needs over his shoulder, the undisputed middleweight champion refuses to relinquish his alphabet straps. Instead of acting independently, he has agreed to defend against William Joppy at the insistence of the WBA.

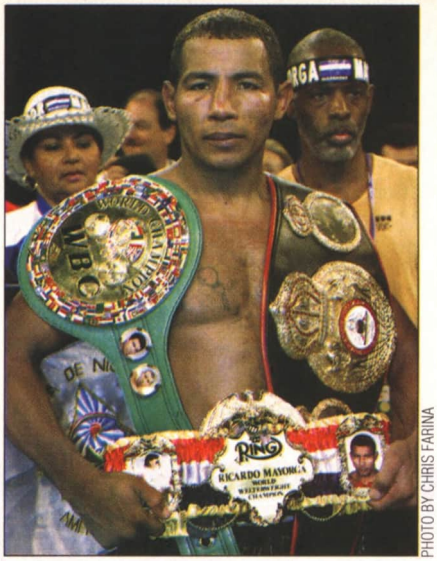


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Welterweight champion Ricardo Mayorga shows off THE RING belt following his repeat win over Vernon Forrest. The flamboyant slugger said he knew that receiving the Bible of Boxing's belt made him a "real champion."

ranking with his victory, accepted the situation with grace. He clearly appreciated that the value of THE RING belt is enhanced by the rigorous rules that govern the winning of it.

When we launched our new policy, THE RING recognized only four world champions. We've made significant progress since then, and now recognize 10, and among the eight traditional divisions, only the bantamweight and flyweight titles are vacant.

THE RING has provided an alternative to the corrupt alphabet system, one that will purge boxing of the people that have treated the sport like their own fiefdom, draining it of capital and credibility. True, we're still in the early rounds of a fight to the finish, but with the future of the Sweet Science at stake, it's a fight that must be won. ■

COMRADES IN ARMS

No cause can be won without the support of strong allies, and THE RING has been fortunate to have several powerful sidekicks in its campaign to rid the sport of paper champions and bogus rankings. But nobody has done more to further the cause than the folks at ESPN.

Not only have *Friday Night Fights* studio hosts Brian Kenny and Max Kellerman been among our earliest and most vocal proponents, beginning in January 2003, ESPN, ESPN2, and ESPNews have used THE RING Ratings, exclusively, during various broadcasts. Moreover, blow-by-blow announcer Joe Tessitore has also helped spread the word by articulating the significance of THE RING Ratings whenever ranked boxers appear on either the *Tuesday* or *Friday Night Fights*.

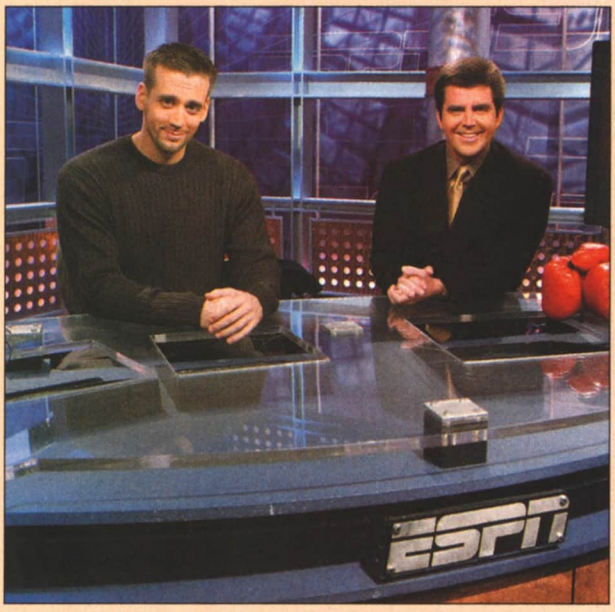
Additional support has come from Kevin Monaghan, vice president of new business development at NBC Sports, who has informed us that if ratings are used when the network resumes its boxing programming, they will be THE RING's.

HBO, a forerunner in ignoring the alphabet organizations, has also requested that we provide updated ratings on a regular basis, and it's not unusual for Jim Lampley or Larry Merchant to invoke THE RING as a source of integrity.

On the cyber side, several MaxBoxing.com columnists continue to write favorably of THE RING's championship policy.

While the print media has provided some support, most noticeably *USA Today's* Dan Rafael, much of our ink-stained brethren have been slow on the uptake. There's undoubtedly myriad reasons for this, but regardless, THE RING believes that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. One thing's for sure: Writing countless columns bemoaning the demise of boxing isn't going to help. We already know boxing has problems. What the game needs now is solutions, and THE RING has offered one. Even if writers don't use THE RING name, as long as they begin recognizing only the real world champions, it will be a huge step in the right direction. The more support we receive, the sooner boxing will be back on its feet, punching its way back to where it belongs—at the pinnacle of the sporting world.

—NC



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LAILA ALI: A ONE-WOMAN SHOW

By Joe Santoliquito

When Laila Ali first started out, many expected the daughter of the most famous fighter on the planet to have about half the shelf life of a reality TV star. She had to undergo reams of criticism, lambasting on the front pages of sport sections, and outright laughter. But she endured all of that to reach the point where she is today—at the pinnacle of women's boxing.

So beating Christy Martin, the face of female fist fighting for the past decade, was nothing that dramatic for the 25-year-old daughter of Muhammad Ali. Beating the skeptics has been much tougher.

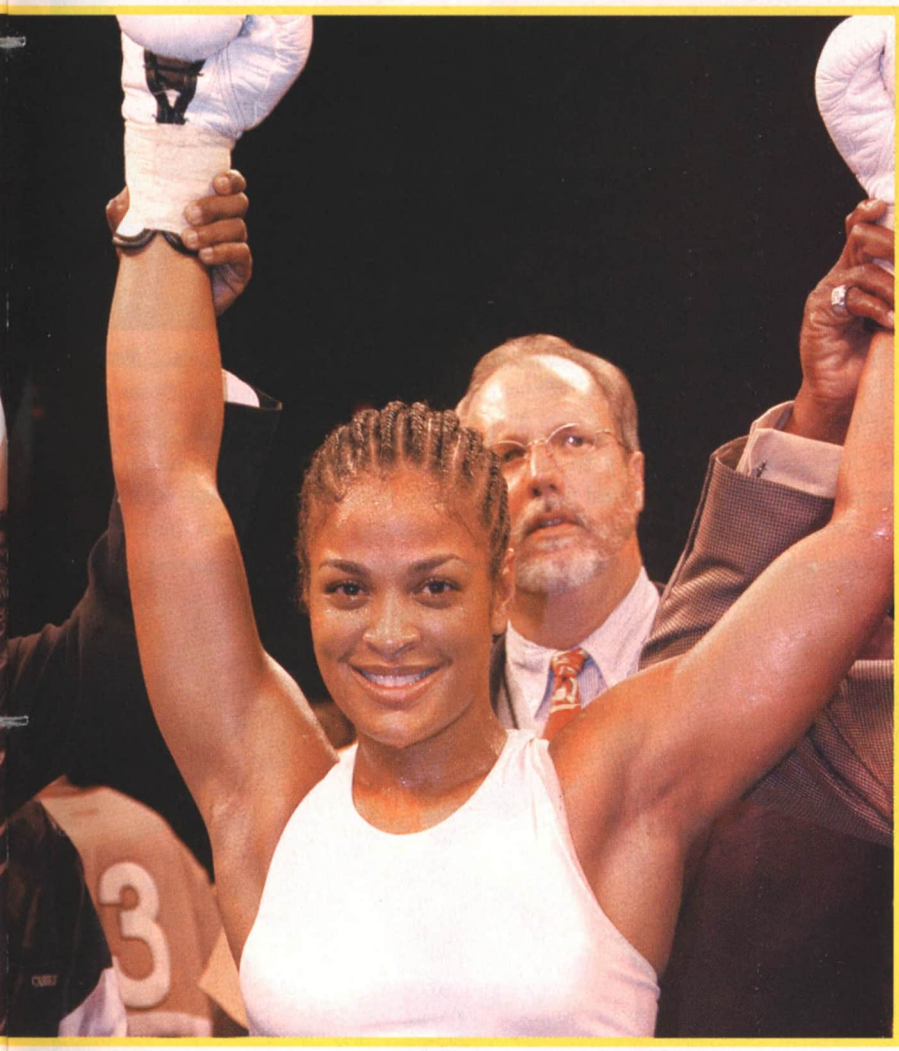
To Laila, conquering the woman once perceived as the best female boxer in the world didn't even prove that Ali is now the best. The beatdown she promised and administered may have led some viewers to that conclusion, but not Ali. That's because Laila had come to that conclusion before the first punch was thrown.

"Beating Christy Martin didn't make me the best, because I went into that fight knowing already that I'm the best women's fighter in the world," Ali said.

Further proof of Ali's growing stature was the pay-per-view numbers her fight with Martin generated. With more than 100,000 PPV buys (exact figures were not available at press time), Ali and Martin, who were both paid $250,000, created the most successful women's boxing match in history, exceeding the numbers Ali and Jacqui Frazier-Lyde posted on June 8, 2001. The live gate was also a record-breaker, as a crowd of 9,988 showed up at the

Ali (right) replaced Martin as the face of women's boxing with her fourth-round kayo victory on August 23 in Biloxi, Mississippi (above). The bout drew more than 100,000 pay-per-view buys, making it the most successful PPV fight in women's boxing history.

AFTER CRUSHING CHRISTY, IS THERE ANYONE LEFT?



PHOTOS BY PAT ORR

Coast Coliseum in Tunica, Mississippi, for the August 23 bout.

Despite her success, Laila doesn't feel a responsibility to carry the female side of the sport the way her father carried the male side decades earlier.

"I didn't do this fight to help women's boxing. This fight was for me; everything is for me," Laila said. "I don't owe women's boxing anything, but at the same time, I do care about the sport as a whole. I think beating Christy Martin the way I did helped women's boxing. It showed that people could come away liking what they see from a woman fighter. I don't mind being the standard. Who else better than me? I have a name behind me. I have commercials and endorsements. I *am* women's boxing, and I don't have a problem saying that. Most of these women don't appreciate what I've done. But the world wasn't ready for women's boxing to be carried by someone just on their name. You have to work for it."

There's no question that Ali has. Her skills have improved so dramatically in such a short time (less than four years as a pro), it's impossible to question how much work she's put in. But did her four-round thumping of the smaller, older Martin elevate women's boxing into the consciousness of a larger audience? Or is women's boxing going to be forever viewed as a sideshow, regardless of how talented or marketable its leading star is?

Ali, 16-0 (13), is in by far the best position of anyone to change that perception—assuming she doesn't quit fighting in the next year or two, as she says she might. If she does that, she probably won't have enough time to elevate the sport as much as she's elevated herself. After all, she may already be the pound-for-pound best female fighter in the world, and she did against Martin what superior fighters are supposed to do in marquee fights: dominate.

Ali was a huge favorite entering the bout, in part because of her advantages of 10 years in age, six inches in height, and at least 20 pounds in weight. Regardless of what Martin may have had hidden in her army fatigues to scale 159 pounds at the weigh-in, she was estimated to be no more than 147 at fight time, whereas Laila, who officially weighed in at 162, appeared to be more like 170 by the opening bell.

Ali wanted to establish her dominance in the opening minutes of the fight, attacking "The Coal Miner's Daughter" and forcing her back. Laila took control using a short right hand with which she couldn't help but hit Martin. She hurt her rival late in round one, and, in the third round, dropped the

PHOTO BY CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES

Ali immediately established her dominance over the much smaller Martin, landing big rights to the face of "The Coal Miner's Daughter." Martin was teetering by the end of the first round, simply unable to cope with Ali's size, power, and speed.

35-year-old for the first time in her long career. After taking brutal punishment the first three rounds, Martin fell victim to another onslaught in the fourth and dropped to a knee, where she remained as referee Fred Steinwinder counted her out 48 seconds into the round.

It was that easy.

"I thought it would be that easy," Laila confirmed. "I said it in all the prefight interviews and people didn't realize what kind of beatdown it would be. I normally don't fight that way. My strategy wasn't to go in like that, but I wanted to beat her ass and get it over with. I was just ready for the whole promotion to be over. She pissed off my husband so badly that I had to get her quick and go off and celebrate. I don't play like my dad in the ring, and I have my own sense of humor. I don't say things to make other people laugh. I say things that are funny to me. It wasn't that big of a deal to beat her."

The interest in Ali's one-sided performance against Martin, 45-3-2 (30), indicates the public will probably come back for more, and that will require somebody marketable in the other cor-

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

The prefight venom between Ali and Martin spilled over into the ring, as Ali punished Martin throughout the entire four rounds. Laila knocked Martin down twice, the first times Martin ever touched the canvas in her career.

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Despite landing a clean left to the body here, the veteran Martin was mostly ineffective even when she was able to penetrate inside Ali's long reach. A bruised and swollen Martin commented after the fight that hitting the much larger Ali was "like hitting a wall."

ner. Possible future rivals include super middleweight Ann Wolfe, heavyweight Vonda Ward, and junior welterweight Lucia Rijker, who's still considered among the best female fighters in the world despite her inactivity. Also on the horizon could be a possible rematch against Frazier-Lyde, which wouldn't prove anything new, but could nonetheless be another moneymaker.

As for Martin, Ali's dominating performance signaled the end of her reign as queen of the ring—an end that had been foreshadowed when she lost on points to Sumya Anani about five years ago. After the Ali fight, The Coal Miner's Daughter looked like she'd just climbed out of a mineshaft, despite trying to hide bruises and bumps with a pair of pink sunglasses. Martin looked too old and tired to continue as the poster girl for her sport, but that's okay, because she doesn't need to at the moment.

"I would say Laila is the face of women's boxing right now," said Anani, who has won belts at welterweight, junior welterweight, and lightweight. "Laila is getting all of the media attention because of her name, but she's also backing it up with all of her skills. It's too bad there aren't a lot of women out there for Laila to test herself against. We'll have to wait and see what Laila's win over Christy means, based on the size disparity, but I hope it does a lot of good for the sport, because we need a lot of help."

Another boost could come in the form of a bout between Ali and Wolfe, the powerful 168-pounder from Austin, Texas, who avenged the only loss of her career with a clear-cut 10-round decision over stubborn Valerie Mahfood on the Ali-Martin undercard. A year ago, some may have considered Wolfe, 15-1 (11), a favorite over Ali. But like so many women in boxing, inactivity stalled Wolfe's career, and she hadn't

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A number of lucrative options could await Ali, including (left to right) super middleweight Ann Wolfe, welterweight Lucia Rijker, heavyweight Vonda Ward, and a rematch with Jacqui Frazier-Lyde. But they won't all get a chance, as Ali says she expects to fight only two or three more times.

fought in 2003 prior to the Mahfood rematch. Ali, meanwhile, had continued to improve and stay busy over the past year, making her a solid favorite over Wolfe now.

Does Laila think Wolfe represents the rival she needs to further establish herself? Could Wolfe become The Greatest's daughter's version of Joe Frazier?

"I wouldn't say Joe Frazier. Ann's more like my George Foreman," Ali said, laughing. "Ann Wolfe will get a beatdown, too. It'll be harder than what I did to Christy, because Ann is a strong girl, but she doesn't have a whole lot in her arsenal. But I give Ann credit. Ann Wolfe will fight me, she won't be afraid to get in there and mix it up."

Wolfe would certainly like nothing better than the opportunity to step into the ring with Ms. Ali. She was ringside as Laila pounded Martin, but came away unimpressed.

"Laila was too big for that lady," Wolfe said in her slow, Southern drawl. "Laila was just overwhelmingly too big for little Christy, but Laila has the skills and she does have some talent. But Laila hasn't gone balls-to-the-wall against a very good fighter yet. I'm not taking anything from Laila, but she has to fight these rugged-ass women out there. Sometimes, you have fighters that go throughout history undefeated because they don't fight anyone. Laila has gotten a lot better, I'll admit,

PHOTO BY CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES

Ali has her hand raised by her husband and manager, Johnny "Yahya" McClain, after the fight. Though the promotion was financially successful, many in the media criticized the way it was handled by McClain and partner Brian Young.

but she also has the best of everything. What's really a challenge is what will Laila do when she gets hit too damn hard by someone like me. I won't be intimidated by Laila."

As for Rijker, 16-0 (14), Ali says she has no reason to again fight someone so much smaller than her, despite Rijker's name recognition and the possibility of a big gate. The most Rijker ever weighed for a fight was 141 pounds, plus she has only fought twice since 1999.

"Lucia needs to fight someone in her weight class who is a good fighter," Laila said. "I'm not interested in fighting these little women anymore. The same thing would happen against Lucia Rijker as what happened to Christy Martin, but that goes with anyone that's not in my weight class. There's no disrespect toward Lucia—she's a great, skilled fighter—but these little women need to stay in their weight class and not even think about taking on someone like me just to get some attention. It's committing suicide."

The statuesque 6'6" Ward, the former University of Tennessee basketball player, could put Ali on the other side of that size challenge, but she lacks the quickness and technique of Ali. Although the size disparity could create intrigue, remember that Ward, 18-0 (15), barely got by late replacement Martha Salazar in a four-rounder on March 1. Then there is Frazier-Lyde, 11-1 (9), who has done little since her entertaining eight-round majority decision loss to Ali.

"Vonda has belts, but she's slow and she doesn't have any lateral movement. She's pitiful," Ali said. "And Jacqui, *please*. We've actually tried contacting Jacqui to fight again, and they've been ignorant again. I personally don't think the Fraziers can deal with another Ali beatdown, but I would definitely love to fight Jacqui again. I would definitely go through all of that promotional stuff again, just to beat her ass the way I should have the first time."

Could any of those fights draw as well as Ali-Martin? Maybe, if in fact it was almost all Ali's name, and not Martin's, that brought the impressive pay-per-view numbers. The numbers made an especially strong statement in light of the unorganized way the promotion was handled.

The promotion succeeded despite itself. Billed as "The Biggest Fight In Women's Boxing History," the fine print underneath could have read, "How Not To Promote A Fight." A number of major media outlets panned the way things were run and the unprofessional way in which Ali, her husband/manager, Johnny "Yahya" McClain, and Brian Young of Prizefight Promotions conducted themselves during the promotion.

"It was the most pathetic promotion I ever saw in 23 years at *SI*," said Frans Lidz of *Sports Illustrated*, who had to shell out $265 for a ringside seat after he was turned down for a press credential because he had not previewed the fight.

Despite all the criticism, which included much postfight bashing of the fight's one-sidedness, from a bottom-line perspective, it was a success.

"We're quite pleased with the event's performance, and we look forward to Laila's next big pay-per-view matchup," said Dan York, senior vice president of In Demand Pay-Per-View. "Obviously, Laila sells."

The truth is, Ali has elevated herself somewhat by beating a name like Martin, but a lopsided victory over an overmatched opponent and a poorly organized event just perpetuated women's boxing's two-bit, sideshow image. Even Ali sounded somewhat downtrodden by the dearth of opportunities left for her after the biggest victory of her career. She said she wants to start having kids and may only have two or three more fights.

"Don't get me wrong, I'd like to stay in boxing," Laila said, "and I probably could fight girls that would be no competition. But why? I make more money outside of boxing than I do with boxing.

"But beating Christy Martin did feel good, because the respect is something that I've wanted, and I think I finally got it with that fight. There's more to come, hopefully."

That's something all of women's boxing should be saying, as far as Laila Ali's career is concerned. Because right now, she's not only the sport's leading hope—she may be its only hope. ■

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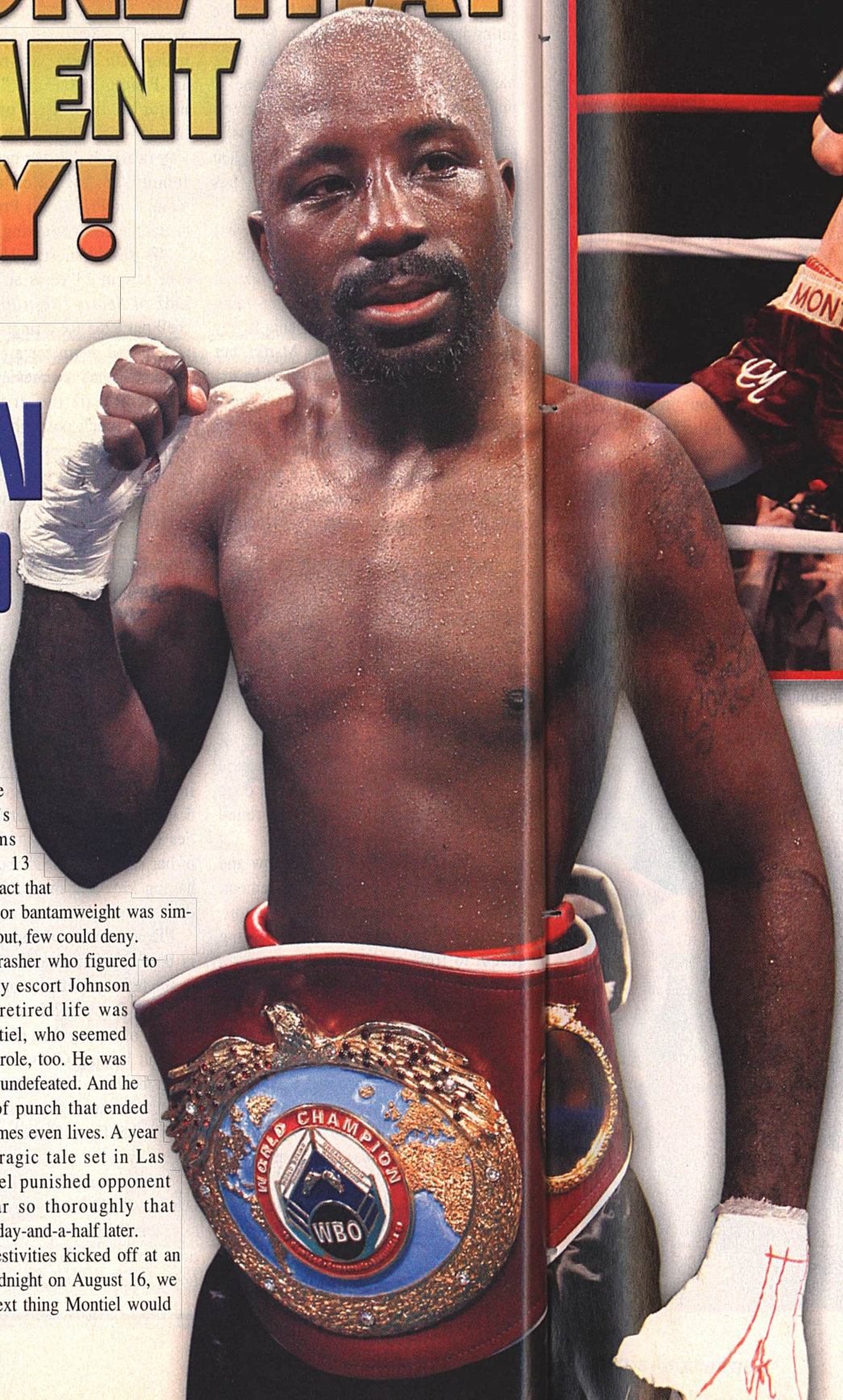


Johnson's southpaw style confounded Montiel throughout the early stages of the bout, allowing "Too Sharp" to catch his relatively inexperienced opponent off-balance and land shots from awkward angles. Montiel took seven or eight rounds to get loose and adjust, and by that time, Johnson was way ahead on the cards.

By Ted Bodenrader

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/HBO

You could practically still taste the cake and champagne on your lips, and still hear the ballroom ballads humming in the background. Then, when Micky Ward waltzed in dressed to the nines, it was as if the gallant retirement bash had never ended at all.

In a way, it hadn't.

The very night after sending off the famed junior welterweight in style, the folks at the Mohegan Sun resort were at it again, conjuring up yet another festive farewell to another aging warrior. Ward, in his first official night as an ex-fighter, was merely a guest this time, one of the 3,866 patrons bidding adieu to another aging colleague.

The guest of honor was none other than Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson, a jolly good fellow and one of the game's bona fide gems over the past 13 years. But the fact that the spunky junior bantamweight was simply on his way out, few could deny.

The party crasher who figured to single-handedly escort Johnson straight into retired life was Fernando Montiel, who seemed perfect for the role, too. He was young. He was undefeated. And he had the kind of punch that ended careers, sometimes even lives. A year before, in a tragic tale set in Las Vegas, Montiel punished opponent Pedro Alcazar so thoroughly that Alcazar died a day-and-a-half later.

So, when festivities kicked off at an hour before midnight on August 16, we expected the next thing Montiel would lay to rest would be Johnson's dulling career.

But as it turned out, the party on August 16 wasn't about retirement after all. It was all about reinstatement, as Too Sharp proved to be too smart, too swift, too strong, too game, and ultimately just a bit too much for Montiel.

While this one ended with something of a question mark rather than a full-fledged exclamation point, Johnson, now 32, still managed to nail down the majority decision by night's end, taking home to Washington, D.C., one of the most significant victories of his career. And like cake frosting, it provided a sweet taste of glory that proved so elusive in recent years.

"This was my night," said Johnson. "Yeah, they thought this was going to be it for me. The end. That's what they thought. Instead, it turned out to be the best night of my career. It put me right back on top."

Not only did the win issue a temporary continuance of this brilliant career, it also provided him with an image boost to boot. Carving a swift right jab that busted up Montiel's face, Johnson also drove home enough sneaky power pelts to convince us that we were wrong about him, especially the one in round five that provided the fight's sole knockdown. When Johnson raked a looping right across Montiel's chin, dropping the confused Mexican to his right knee, it was obvious our good-bye intentions were a tad premature.

By the time it was over, the 24-year-old Montiel, 26-1-1 (20), was sporting the effects of the beating: a cracked, bloodied forehead to go with a pair of welted eyes.

But this party didn't end with a bang. Instead, the aging Johnson faltered down the stretch and crossed the finish line like a tired, old dog. It was just enough to let a touch of uncertainty linger after the final bell had sounded.

The wily Johnson maneuvered Montiel to the ropes on numerous occasions. Sometimes Johnson would score with effective bodyshots (above), while other times, Montiel would fight back and score with quick combinations (below). But even when the Mexican rallied, he never managed to hurt Too Sharp and fully turn the tide.

Hence, the most dramatic moment of the night came when Michael Buffer gathered the scorecards for the official reading. As Buffer rendered the good news for Johnson (114-114, 114-112, 117-110), it made way for a celebration not unlike the one that followed his 1996 triumph over Francisco Tejedor, the victory that earned him his first major title.

But Johnson knows he didn't pull this off with hand speed, stinging combinations, or even a southpaw stance that befuddled Montiel from one round to the next. No, his biggest advantage was 13 years in the making.

"Johnson knew exactly what his edge was going into this fight," explained HBO blow-by-blow man Jim Lampley. "He understood that Fernando Montiel was a young man who hadn't mastered the event. Everybody knew he had talent. Everybody knew he had a big punch. But what Johnson knew that others didn't was that he'd been in this caliber of event before and he knew to expose Montiel's inexperience, his tentativeness, and his lack of knowledge on how to perform in these situations."

Then, as if we'd forgotten, Johnson spent his victory dance buzzing from one media type to the next, reminding them of his impeccable credentials. Namely, he wanted the world to remember he was the first African-American fighter to win titles in the diminutive classes of 112 and 115 pounds.

"In plain English," Lampley explained, "I guess he was trying to tell us that he was once the best itty-bitty black fighter in the world."

If Johnson seemed in a self-aggrandizing mood during the hour immediately following the Montiel victory, perhaps it was because his pride had taken such a vicious licking in recent years.

As his reputation began to shrink during the early part of the millennium, Johnson's 5'3" frame was starting to expand. Not only were his once-rapid fists beginning to lose steam, so was his metabolism, as the slugger from Washington, D.C., found it increasingly

difficult to make the 115-pound limit. Poor eating habits further pushed him over the junior bantamweight border, and Johnson was forced to take on unfamiliar foes. Once the giant of the flyweights, Johnson now found himself dwarfed by 118-pounders.

The result was consecutive losses to rising star Rafael Marquez, the second of which was a punishing eighth-round knockout defeat in February 2002 that sunk Johnson to both a personal and professional low. What he was left to eat in the ensuing months was crow, and plenty of it.

"That was rock bottom for me," said Johnson. "I wasn't accustomed to losing no damn fight, especially two in a row. That kind of thing ain't supposed to happen to me."

So, over the 16 months that followed, Johnson slipped into a rut of inactivity, where he was left to ponder exactly what went wrong in his once-brilliant career.

Sure, the prison stint in 2000 for spousal abuse didn't help. Nor did the messy divorce from now-ex-wife Samantha that followed, or the repeated stints with drugs that plagued him during the prime years of his career.

But Johnson didn't fret about the mistakes of the past. He instead focused on the ones he could erase, namely the one around his waistline.

"I knew the main thing [in the Marquez fights] was that I was too heavy, and that I shouldn't have been fighting at 118 pounds," Johnson admitted. "Those guys were too big up there for me to be competitive at that weight. I knew I was a much better fighter at 115 pounds."

So, in order to recapture some of the old flair, Johnson hired a nutritionist, and within weeks, noticed things began to change. While the numbers on the scale took on a dramatic decline, his strength and stamina were on the rise.

"It made a world of difference," said Johnson. "I felt terrific with this nutritionist, the best I've felt in years. And coming back down to my natural weight, it almost felt like I was coming home."

When he was inked in July to face Montiel on an HBO *Boxing After Dark* card, Johnson, along with father/trainer Ham, approached the opportunity like it was their party's last hurrah.

The jab was a key for Johnson, and Montiel couldn't find a rhythm of his own because of it. Another key was the weight, as Johnson was perhaps the stronger man in the ring, which hadn't been the case in his recent forays up into the 118-pound division.

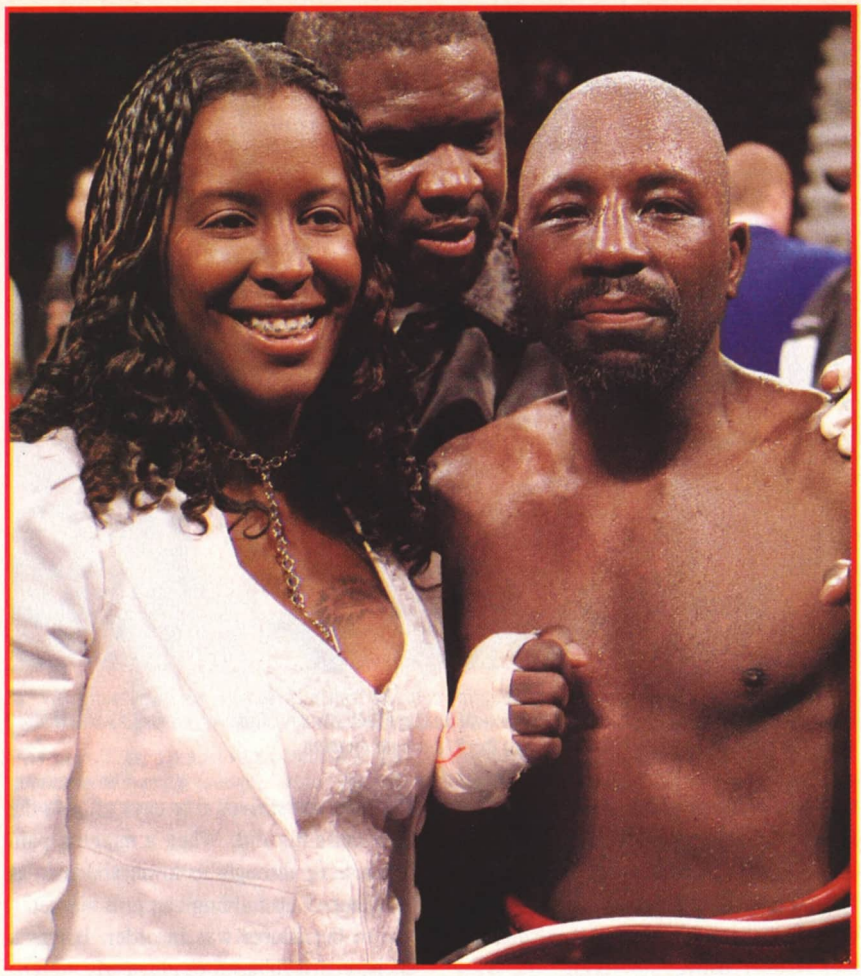
"That was our whole theme of the training camp," Johnson said. "We kept hollering to each other every day in the gym, 'We gotta win this one, we gotta win this one,' because we knew that if we didn't, it was all over, baby."

But if the thoughts of a Montiel power shower didn't scare the veteran Johnson, the news he received five days prior to the fight certainly did. When a nagging pain began to rip through his lower abdomen as he wrapped up training camp, it seemed a trip to the doctor was in order. It was a decision that Johnson would nearly regret.

"He told me I had appendicitis," recalled Johnson. "I couldn't believe it. All

PHOTO BY RICHARD ESPOSITO

Ham Johnson basks in the glory of triumph with his son moments after Too Sharp recorded his first significant win since 1999. Ham has trained Mark throughout his pro career and even stuck by him when the fighter went to jail. Now they can look forward to additional paydays together.



Johnson's new wife, Valeeka, was all smiles as she and her husband celebrated his upset win. A serious player again in the lower weight divisions, the 32-year-old Johnson also appears to be thriving in his personal life after many troubled years.

that hard work for nothing. That was all I needed to hear. The fight was off."

Upon further examination, however, the doctor phoned Johnson the next day to report that there was, in fact, no inflammation of his appendix. Rather, he sustained a pinched nerve in his lower, right abdomen. The real nerve, however, would come prior to the fight. Underdog Johnson was so sure of victory that camp members tossed around T-shirts that recognized him as a "three-time world champion," even if the belt he'd soon collect was only the WBO hardware.

"The first two weren't going to be anything compared to this one," Johnson said, adding that the real belt he yearned for was THE RING belt. "I knew this was gonna be big because people in D.C. were on me pretty hard. They told me if I didn't win this one, I might as well move."

Nonetheless, when their prophecy rung true, it left many of the night's patrons to contemplate Johnson's next move, which obviously would not involve a retirement party.

"There's only one fight that really makes sense to make," explained Lampley, "and it's one that I feel American fans absolutely deserve."

Of course, Lampley was talking about a showdown with Eric Morel, the feisty flyweight whose shoot-'em-up style, coupled with an unblemished 33-0 (18) record, could have fight fans turning their attention to the light end of the scale.

"I think Johnson did just enough [against Montiel] to be able to call out Morel, and to make it a legitimate big-time event," Lampley added. "At 32 years of age, he's not going to have much time left to cash in on an opportunity like the one a Morel fight presents. And as a fight fan, you'd just hate to see that opportunity fall by the wayside."

Surely, a Johnson-Morel bash would stir up the kind of hoopla not seen among these miniatures since Michael Carbajal and Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez did it three times in the early-1990s and Johnny Tapia and Danny Romero settled their grudge in '97.

Still, a few roadblocks could prevent such a thing from happening in the immediate future, namely the rematch clause that binds Johnson to a second dance with Montiel, should the young Mexican demand it.

It doesn't help matters that Montiel-Johnson was only slightly more engaging that Juan Manuel Marquez' snorefest victory (via ninth-round TKO) over Marcos Licona in the HBO co-feature. In fact, rarely will you see such tranquility when Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti are inside the same room, as they sat together ringside, barely keeping each other awake.

"It would have been much easier to demand a fight like Johnson-Morel if what we had just witnessed was a real crowd-pleasing, fist-flying affair," said Lampley. "Unfortunately, I don't think that was really the case."

Even so, matchmaker Bruce Trampler of Top Rank, Morel's promotional company, revealed that the fight is on their radar.

"Yeah, there have been a lot of discussions about this fight, but nothing is imminent at this point," he explained. "We want Morel to defend one more time at 112, then it looks like he'll be moving up to 115. When that happens, it will be a strong possibility."

Either way, for those penciling in their plans for boxing's next retirement gala, Mark Johnson's fists relayed a sharp message right back: Don't send out those invitations yet.

"I ain't going nowhere," said Johnson. "You saw out there tonight, I still got plenty of fight left in me."

Indeed, he does, and on a momentous night in the Connecticut woods, the man known as Too Sharp did aplenty to build on his fistic 401K. And with a fresh outlook and a new wife, Valeeka, Johnson's personal life also seems to be suitably back on track.

But before he hangs 'em up for real, Mark Johnson wants to be known as much more than just a jolly good fellow. He wants you to know he's still the best itty-bitty black fighter around. ■

Ted Bodenrader is a freelance writer from the Boston area and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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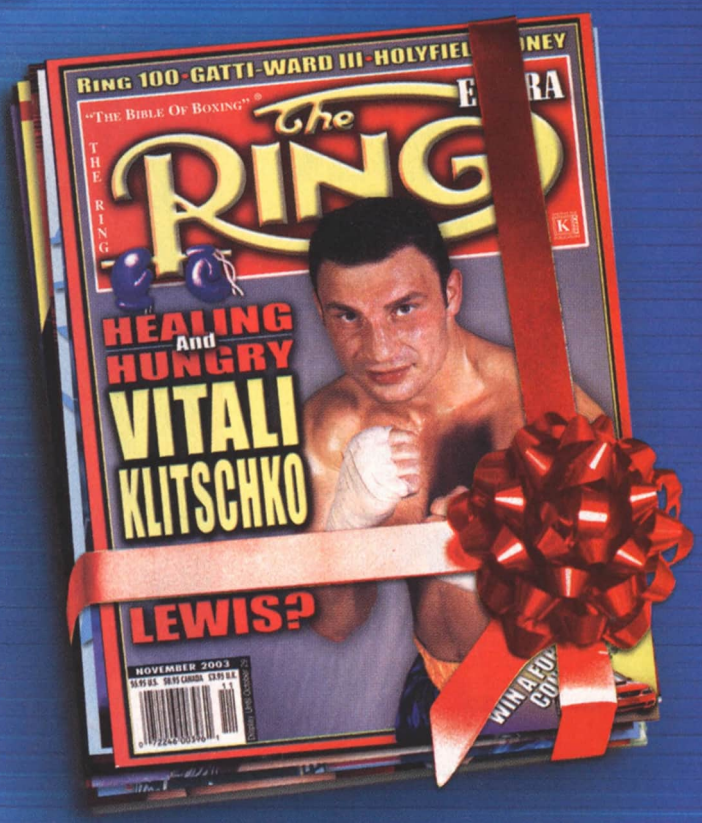

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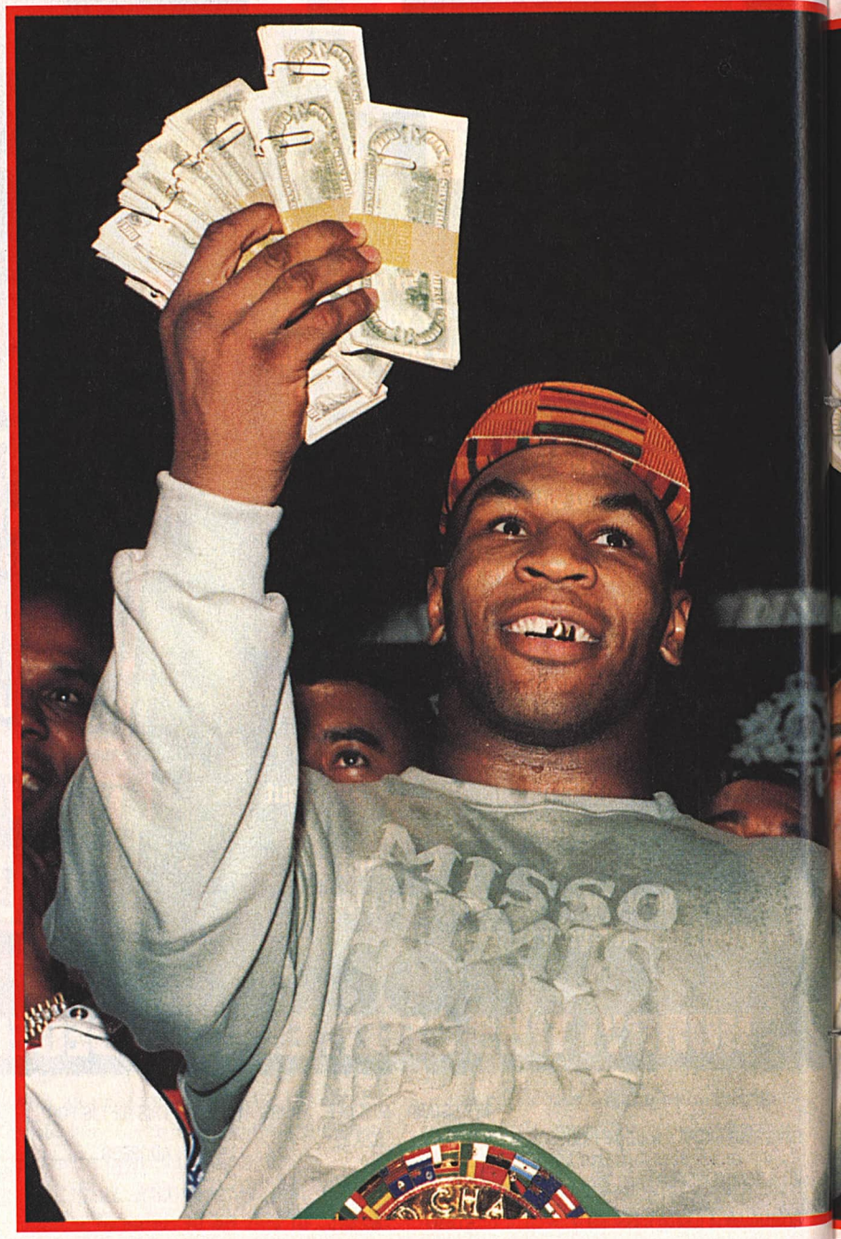
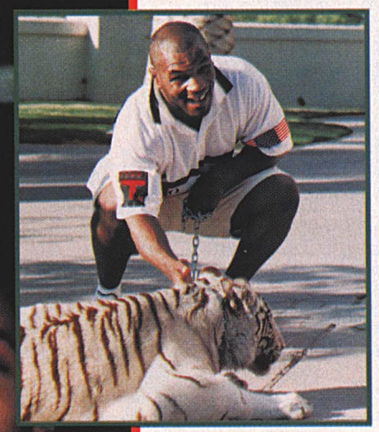
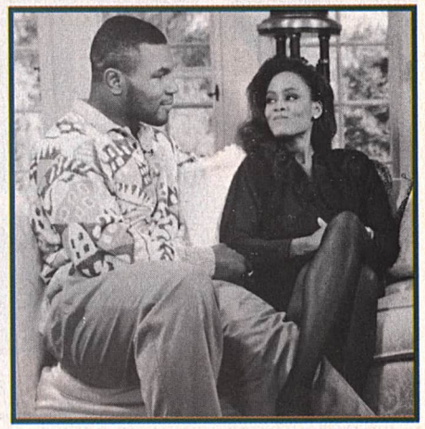
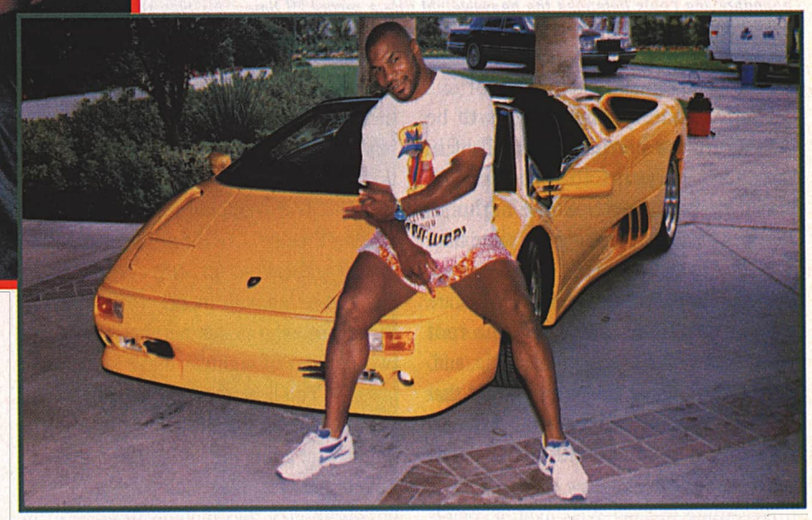
WHY BOXERS GO BROKE

"Fighters Have Been Making The Same Mistakes For A Hundred Years"









By Paul Salgado

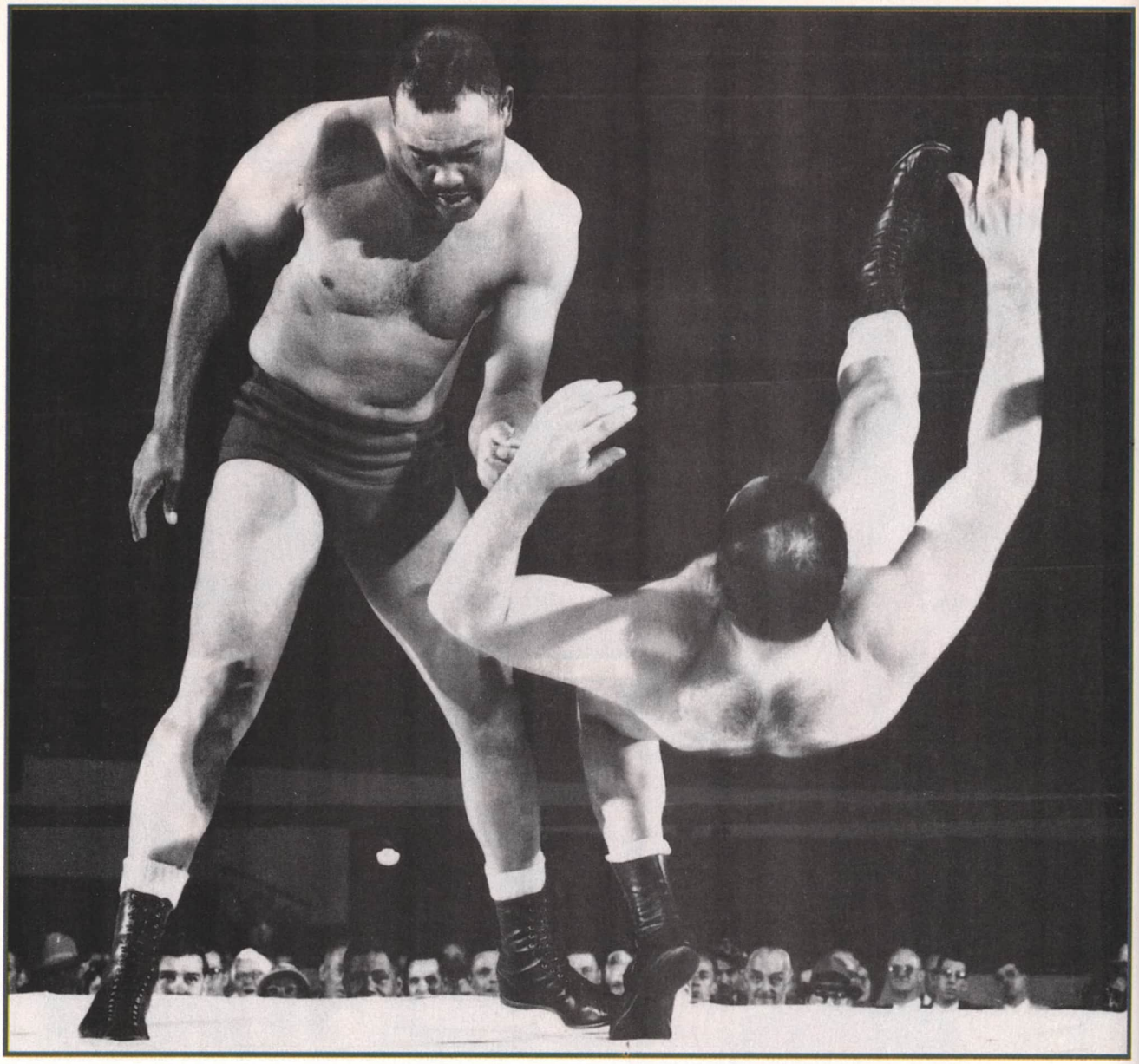
It has become virtually impossible to feel sorry for Mike Tyson. How does a person run through $300-million in ring earnings and wind up bankrupt at the age of 37? Well, Tyson can tell you. And by the way, he has a few Bengal tigers to sell you for cheap.

Tyson's profligate spending and gross financial negligence was so outrageous, it could have earned him an honorary directorship on the Enron board. By now we've all read about his wasted dollars with detached fascination. Detached, because how many among us will ever be able to countenance that kind of money?

To help put it in perspective, the U.S. Department of Social Security estimated the national average wage to be $32,921.92 in 2001. That means it would take the typical American worker roughly 12,150 years to gross the same amount Tyson did in 19 years of boxing, without taking into account such variables as interest or inflation. Framed in that light, Tyson's excess falls nothing short of obscene.

But Tyson's recent financial downfall underscores a problem that is so endemic in boxing history it has become a cliche. Fighters all too often end up broke. It is part of the sport's dark mythology, and we all know the stories well: Joe Louis became the prey of the IRS after falling into insurmountable tax arrears. When his boxing career was over, Louis resorted to wrestling to earn a living, and eventually became a greeter at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. He died penniless in 1981. Beau Jack fought a record 21 main events at Madison Square Garden, including a 1944 bout that earned an unprecedented $35-million at the gate. The proceeds, including Jack's purse, were donated to the war effort. Like Louis, Jack was a hero and a patriot who found himself destitute years later. Louis and Jack are but two famous examples of the phenomenon. Sadly, there are thousands of others.

Mike Tyson displays just a fraction of the hundreds of millions he's earned in boxing (main photo). But his wealth has dissipated thanks to such indulgences as mansions (top), exotic pets (center left), several divorces, including the one with actress Robin Givens (center right), and luxury automobiles.



Legendary Joe Louis defended the heavyweight title a record 25 times, but was so broke when he retired from the ring that he was forced to briefly become a wrestler. "The Brown Bomber's" most costly battles were with the IRS and he died penniless.

So why do fighters go broke?

"Unfortunately, there seems to be somewhat of an inevitability to all of it. And that's very upsetting," observed Showtime broadcaster Steve Farhood. "Fighters have been making the same mistakes for a hundred years."

Perhaps, but while the tragic stories are well-documented, identifying the root causes seems much more problematic, and, in truth, there are a number of reasons that conspire against a fighter's ability to emerge from a career with his finances intact.

According to Loïc Wacquant, a sociologist at the University of California-Berkeley who has written and lectured extensively on the culture of prize fighting, there is a prevailing misconception that boxing provides a viable living for its participants.

"The overwhelming majority of fighters don't really have the problem of losing money and ending up broke, because they don't make enough money for that," said Wacquant, who points out that only about two percent of fighters make substantial purses. "You hear about a fight coming up, and that Tyson is going to fight and the fighters are going to make $10- 15-million. This is the scale on which people think of boxing money and income flows. But in reality these fights are very few. They concern a tiny minority of the fighters. A decent purse for a fighter is a few thousand dollars, or a few tens of thousands of dollars. Six figures and you are getting into a rarefied atmosphere, not to speak of seven figures."

The trickle-down theory doesn't apply to the economy of boxing. An overwhelming majority of fighters will average $100 per round of boxing. Despite the anemic figures, fighters are driven by the belief that they will one day realize a significant payday. In a sense, the fighters adopt a lottery-winning mindset and the delusion sustains their improbable pursuit of fistic glory and riches.

While conducting numerous interviews, Professor Wacquant also observed an

interesting pattern among the professional fighters he spoke with. Each had the same magical figure in mind when they discussed their career aspirations.

"They all said, 'I want to make a million dollars,'" said Wacquant.

For the rare breed of fighter who does achieve the magical million-dollar mark, the inherent pitfalls of a boxing career appear to multiply with the responsibilities of wealth and the rigorous demands of success.

It's commonly believed that an accomplished professional boxer takes approximately seven to eight years to mold, nearly the same amount of time it would take for a person to earn a medical degree or doctorate. And the development comes at a formative stage of young adulthood. At a time where the average person is looking toward an education and contemplating their professional options, fighters are singularly engaged in their careers at the exclusion of many other critical aspects of their lives, including long-term financial considerations and a post-ring career.

"This is where it gets tricky, because if you're a young fighter with talent, you need tunnel vision," said Farhood. "A 23-year-old Dominican junior welterweight is not thinking about what he's going to be doing at 35, and saying, 'I need that accounting class, so I have some skills to fall back on.' Now some will do that. But most won't. And that singular tunnel vision is part of the reason they're successful in the ring."

But the tendency to discount long-term financial goals may not only be attributable to the investment a fighter's career demands. It can also simply be a disposition of youth. Most young fighters don't see tomorrow. They're not interested in tomorrow. Tomorrow is a concept that they really don't understand. Maybe, if you want, you can even stretch that to most young people. A lot of young people are living for today and they don't see or think about the future. In boxing it's more extreme, because the money is greater, and the careers are shorter.

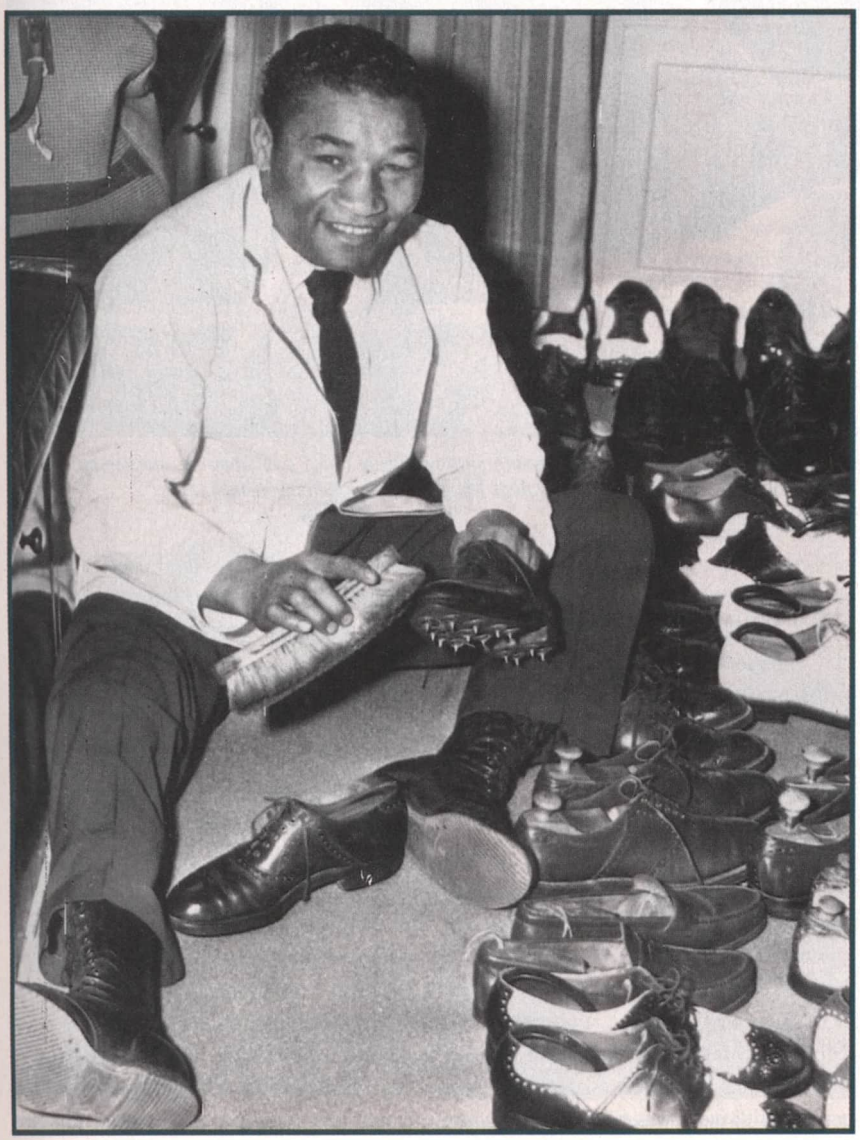
Wacquant points to another reason fighters tend to view their money and careers from a short-term perspective. Boxers are usually raised in tenuous socio-economic conditions that shape their understanding of money.

"Typically, boxers come from a working-class background, very often from immigrant or stigmatized minority communities," said Wacquant. "They come from a background where they don't have the set of skills, nor attitudes, that it takes to save money when they get it. They grow up in a universe where people are living under fairly precarious situations. They live day-to-day, week-to-week. Certainly, they are not in a milieu in which they can envision what's going to happen five or 10 years down the road."

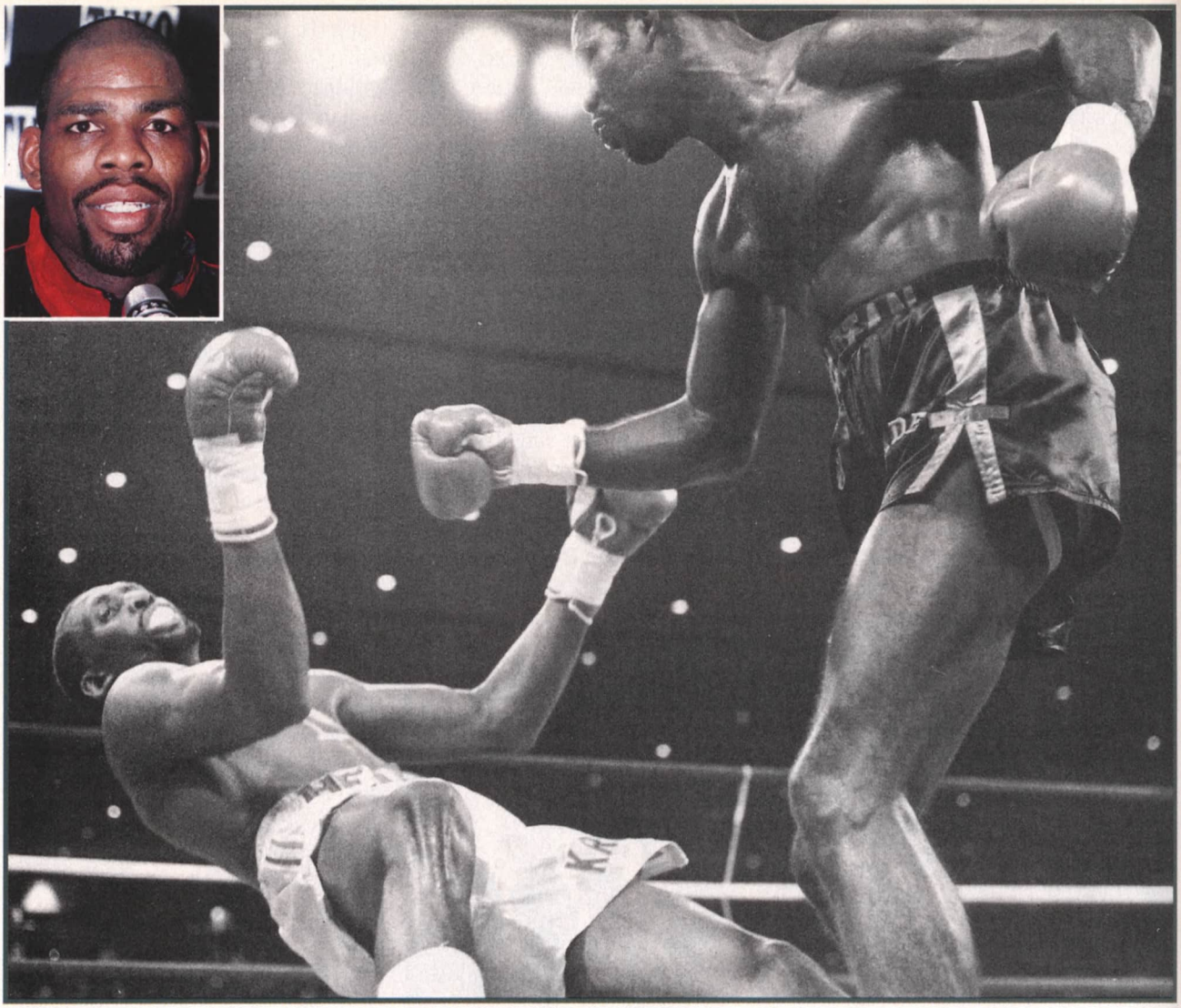
The profile would appear to fit Iran Barkley, who grew up poor on the hard-boiled streets of the Bronx. Barkley was 28 years old when he scored a stunning third-round knockout of Thomas Hearns in 1988 to win the WBC middleweight crown. Today, he is financially insolvent, despite having also won the IBF super middleweight title and having again beaten Hearns, for the WBA light heavyweight title, four years after their first encounter.

"You get caught up in the moment," recalled Barkley. "You're the champion of the world and you know you got another fight coming. So, what the heck! I can spend this money and I can hang out with my friends."

Despite lucrative bouts with Roberto Duran, Michael Nunn, Nigel Benn, and others, Barkley remains uncertain of the sum he grossed in his lengthy ring career. He has frustrated recollections of receiving $500,000 for the return bout against Hearns, which was well below the figure he believes he deserved to be paid. Barkley's career high purse of $1-million against James Toney also evokes bitter-



In another classic rags-to-riches-to-rags saga, former lightweight champ Beau Jack fought 21 main events at Madison Square Garden, but was back shining shoes a few years after he quit boxing.



Although he's not sure exactly how much he earned in boxing, Iran Barkley thought the big paydays would never end when he knocked out Thomas Hearns in 1988 to win the WBC middleweight title. Today (inset) all of Barkley's ring earnings are gone and he still owes back taxes.

sweet memories. On that night, Barkley was battered unmercifully and stopped in nine rounds, providing the first evidence that his prime was eroding.

Barkley's experience was typical of many fighters who are confronted with sudden wealth. They tend to spend recklessly without fully informing themselves of their actual net earnings. Although Barkley's purchases pale in comparison to the lavish expenditures of Tyson, he admits to liberal spending sprees on such excesses as luxury automobiles. And like many fighters, significant amounts were also spent on family, friends, and various hangers-on.

Not surprisingly, the entourage often becomes one of the primary drains on a fighter's assets, but the reasons are often intangible. Although a fighter's ring earnings can remove him from economic deprivation, members of the entourage often remain mired in poverty. For this reason, said Wacquant, "The entourage puts enormous pressure on a fighter, enormous moral pressure and enormous emotional pressure. He has the obligations of kinship. It takes a big toll."

"I'd fly to places with my wife," recalled Barkley. "I'd take a vacation because I deserved it. You hang out with your friends and you're excited to win the title and all of that stuff. You have people that you're being good to. You might fly them in to see you fight. You got family members that you're flying in to see you fight. You're taking care of your whole family. With me it was never 'no,' because I took care of everybody. And then you got everybody pulling on you. You got all the wannabes coming out of the woodwork. You don't know. You think you're doing the right thing, and everybody is hanging on you."

Barkley also claims to have never been shown financial statements during his career, which underscores another problem experienced by many fighters: They tend to yield their business dealings and the administration of their financial affairs to their managers.

Sophisticated business matters can understandably appear daunting to fighters. But according to Ali biographer Thomas Hauser, fighters need to take the necessary steps toward making themselves informed.

"Very often they don't have the educational background," said Hauser. "So they have to work much harder to understand these issues. And it can be intimidating.

But if a guy works hard enough to become a world-class fighter, he should be able to work hard enough to understand his finances. And if he's not intimidated at the thought of getting in a boxing ring, then he should be able to overcome the intimidation factor of overseeing his finances."

But the reality is that the business of boxing often operates in a more onerous environment, and fighters are often encouraged to relinquish control of their financial affairs by their managers, said former heavyweight title challenger Gerry Cooney.

"They're lied to," said Cooney. "Boxing breeds con artists and people that are going to promise you the world. And you live on that dream of becoming champion and making millions of dollars. But the true fact is that not many people reach that level. Very few do, as a matter of fact."

Cooney founded the non-profit organization F.I.S.T. (Fighter's Initiative for Support and Training) in 1998 to help fighters make the difficult transition out of boxing. His own experiences, along with his work with more than 300 fighters, have made him intimately familiar with the financial hazards boxers frequently encounter. Cooney is also aware of the seductions most fighters fall victim to.

"The boxer is taught to believe that: 'I'll handle it. You're busy training. Let me handle it for you. I'll take care of it.'"

Like Hauser, Cooney believes boxers need to take a more active role in educating themselves on money and dealing with their business affairs.

"The fighter needs to be hands-on," stressed Cooney. "He has to have an understanding of what's going on. You know, fighters don't really want to deal with it because they're not familiar with how to handle it. But they have to learn."

As Barkley discovered, however, attending to one's own business matters can sometimes come too late in a career. And, like Louis, Jack, and Tyson, Barkley was stunned to find himself buried under a prohibitive tax debt that began in the late-'80s. Estimated to be in the low seven-figures, Barkley's debt to this day remains in arrears.

"I couldn't even pay for a house," said Barkley. "With me it was always, *the next one I'll do it*. But the next one never came because I was always digging myself out from the first fight with taxes. So you pay the taxes, then you're thinking, *now I got to pay the taxes on this money that I got.* So you never catch up."

Of all the financial crises encountered by fighters, the burden of unpaid taxes appears to be the most insidious and pervasive. From Duran to Julio Cesar Chavez, the story is all too familiar. It is estimated that Tyson owes Uncle Sam $13.4-million, with another $4-million unpaid to the British tax authorities.

Knowledge is crucial, said Cooney, when asked what advice he would give to a young fighter.

"I would have him understand what monies are available," said Cooney. "Where the money's coming from and how much is his. And have him learn about investing money. A fighter needs to grow as a whole human being. What makes a good fighter is not just his physical capabilities, but his mental capabilities."

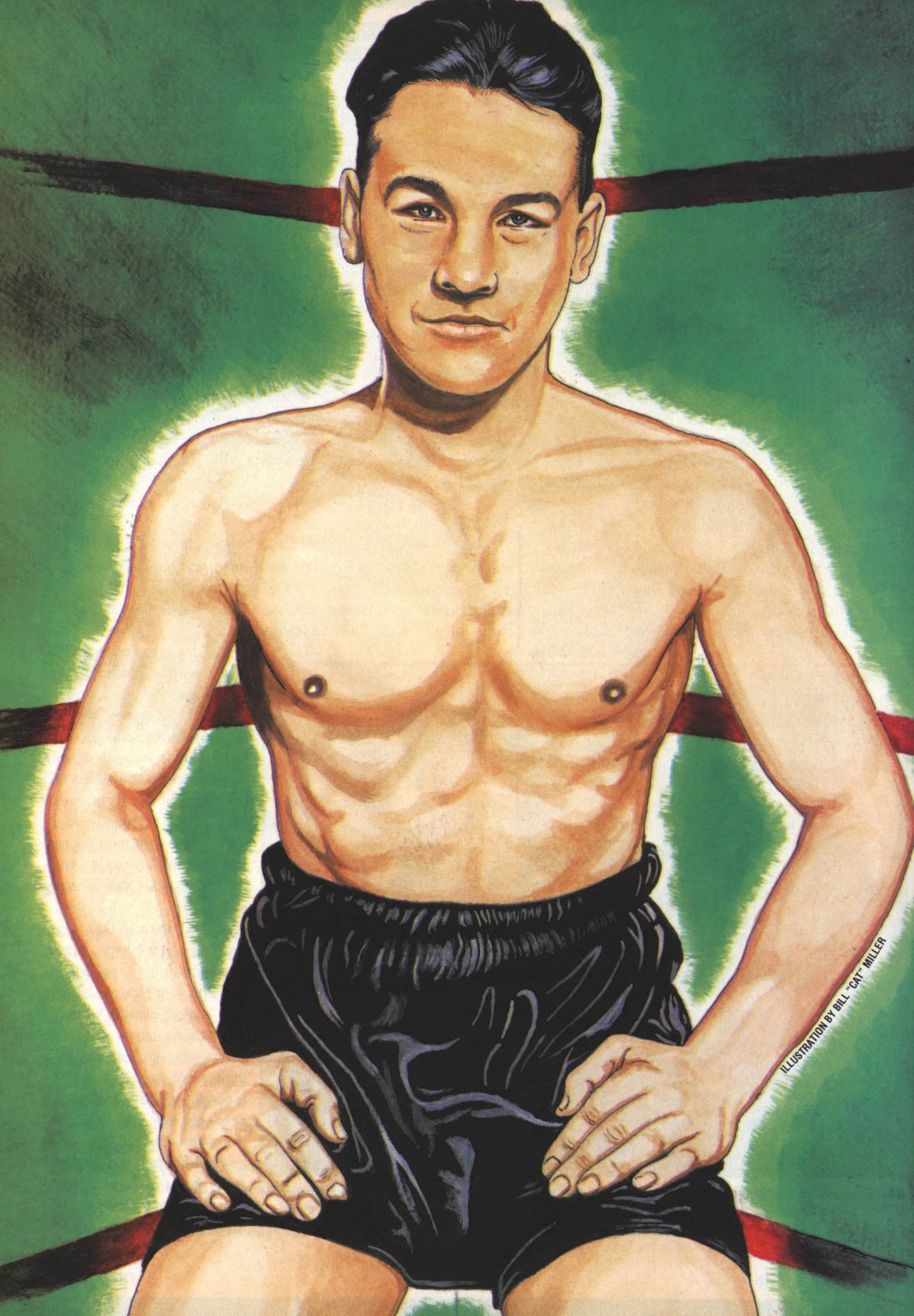
"You're learning about life. I mean, this don't come with no book where they say you gotta do this and you gotta do that," said Barkley, reflecting on the difficulties of his career.

Barkley maintains he is not bitter about his misfortune, but he possesses the jaundiced hindsight of a person who committed himself to a sport governed by self-interest. As someone who has seen both the best and the worst of the fight game, Barkley has personally counseled young fighters in the past and shares Cooney's sentiments, but adds one sobering addendum.

"I tell them, 'Don't get caught up in the hype. 'Cause that's what it is—hype. Do your job. Win your fights. And save your money. Because when it's over, these mothers will forget about you quicker than anything. They need you now. So use it all to your advantage, but keep your eyes open. You can't really trust nobody.'" ■

Paul Salgado is a freelance writer based in Toronto, Ontario, and an occasional contributor to this magazine.

Former heavyweight contender Gerry Cooney (pictured with Magic Johnson at a fundraiser) managed to hold on to most of his money. He now runs F.I.S.T., an organization that helps boxers make the transition back into civilian life after boxing. Cooney believes fighters need to be educated in the financial aspects of the sport.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WELTERWEIGHT CHAMP
JIMMY McLARNIN

He Fought 10 Hall Of Famers And Beat Them All!

By Robert Cassidy

Jimmy McLarnin's tenure as a world champion ended a day short of two years. His reign as a great fighter, however, spanned his entire career.

He was known as "Baby Face" because the fight scribes of the day claimed he looked no older than 12. Whatever innocence they saw in the pale, blue-eyed boxer simply served to mask one the finest fighting machines of the Depression era.

In the seven decades since McLarnin's prime, reality and legend have become entwined, thus complicating an accurate interpretation of his career. The sum of his accomplishments is often overshadowed by a pair of sidebars rooted in fact but inflated by generations of barroom debates. One is that he targeted Jewish opponents, and another is that he built his career beating up smaller men.

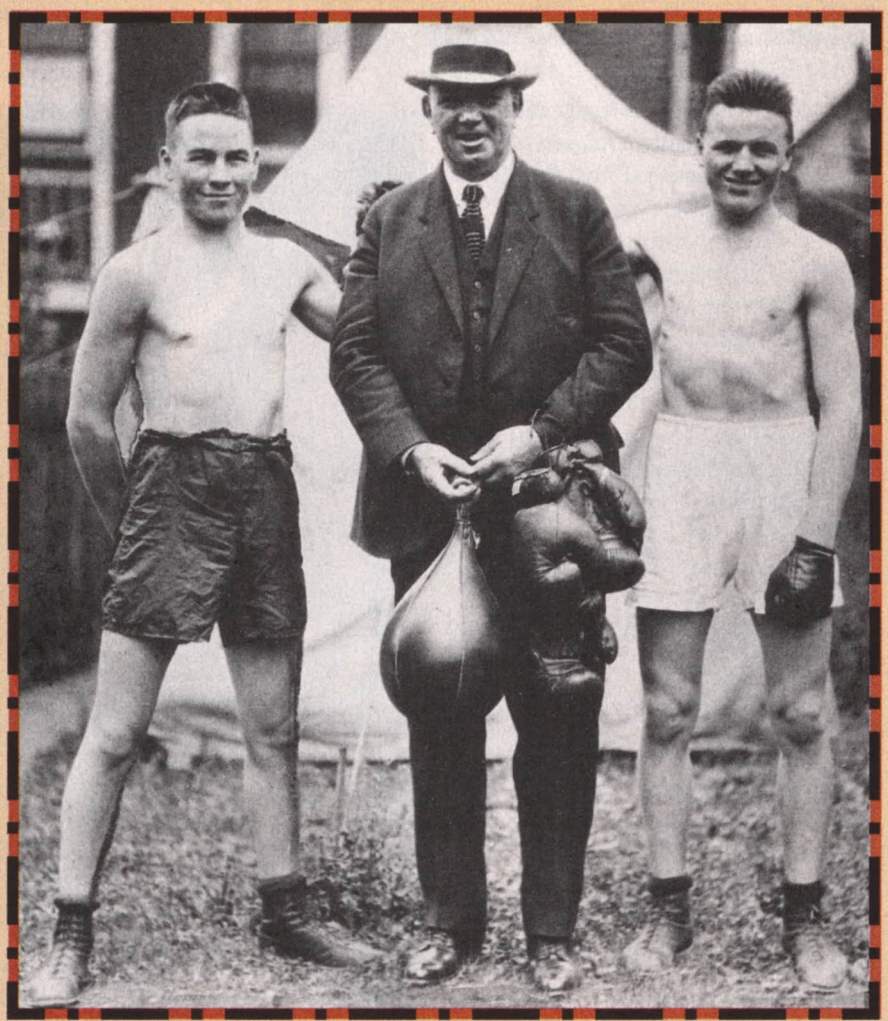
There are two facts, however, that cannot be disputed. The first is the caliber of opposition McLarnin faced.

Throughout his 13-year career, McLarnin fought 10 Hall of Famers and 15 world champions. Those champions were titleholders in seven different weight classes, ranging from flyweight to middleweight. He also beat two Olympic gold medalists, and on five occasions, McLarnin beat a reigning champion in a non-title bout.

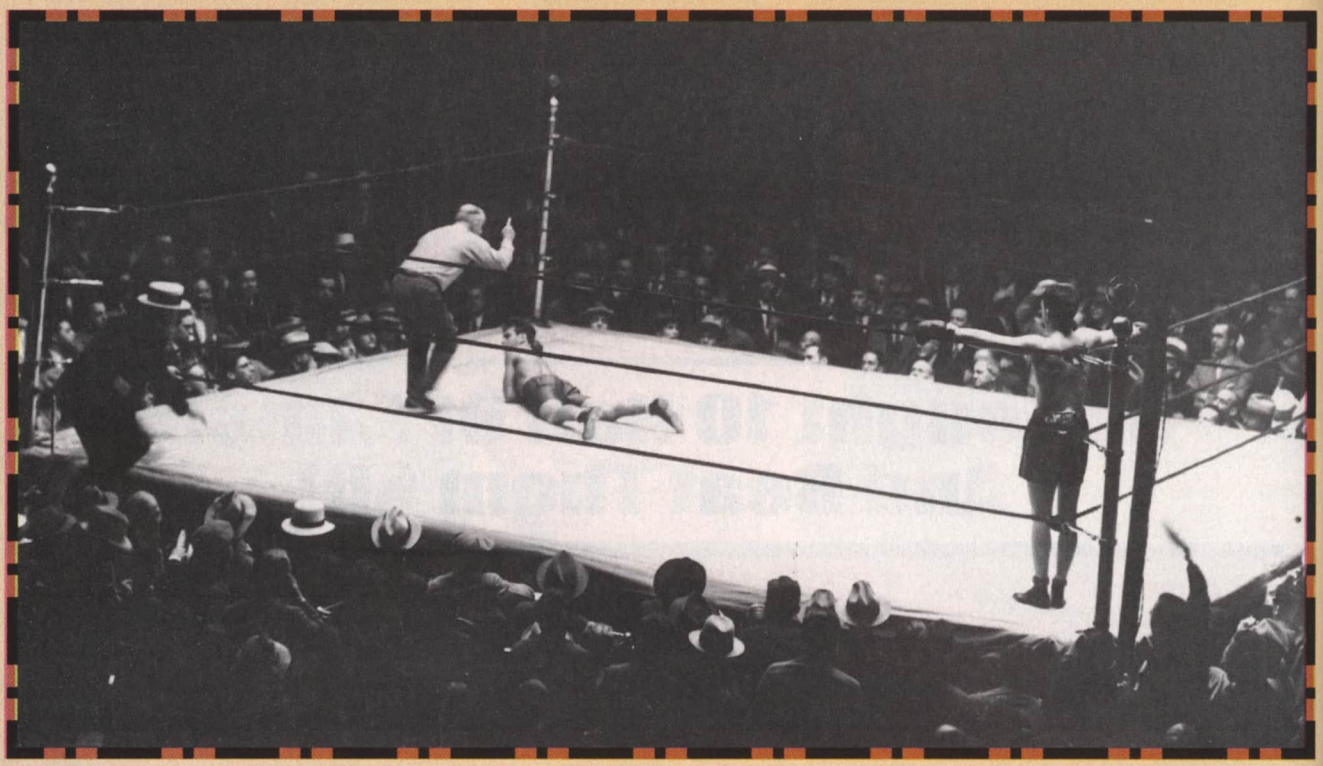
The second is that, in Charles "Pop" Foster, he had a manager who fought as hard outside the ring as his fighter fought inside of it.

There is a story that says when McLarnin was 12 years old, hawking newspapers on a Vancouver street corner, he got into a scuffle with another boy. Although McLarnin was the smaller of the two, he was getting the better of his opponent and thus caught the eye of Pop Foster, a former journeyman boxer and World War I veteran. Impressed by McLarnin's spirit, Foster invited him to a local boxing gym.

Whether or not that particular item is true (press agents and promoters often



A young McLarnin (left) poses with manager Pop Foster and Sammy McLarnin, Jimmy's younger brother who had a brief pro career. The 1926 photo was taken just three years into McLarnin's career, before he invaded the East Coast and became a huge star.



McLarnin watches as the referee counts out lightweight champion Al Singer in the third round of their 1930 non-title bout at Yankee Stadium. McLarnin was criticized in some quarters for frequently fighting men smaller than himself.

scripted such copy for the benign media of that era), the relationship between McLarnin and Foster flourished from the beginning. The manager looked after McLarnin as if he were his own son, often feeding him and finding housing for him during periods between fights. The fighter and manager remained loyal to one another throughout the remainder of their lives.

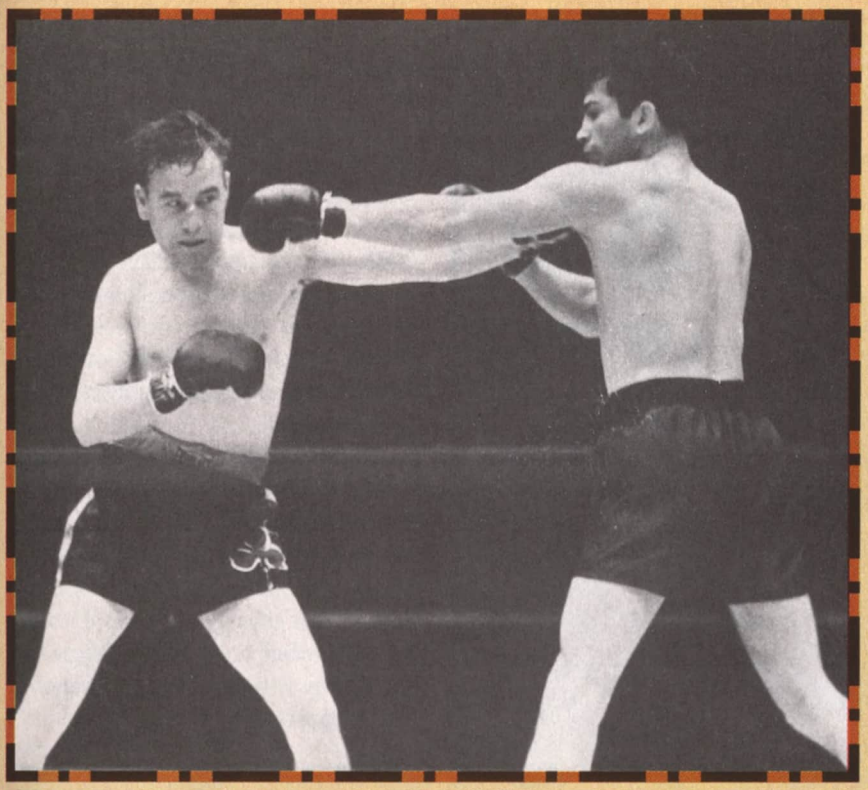
Foster turned McLarnin pro at the age of 16 in 1923, and by the end of the year they sailed out of Vancouver for Northern California, where they began campaigning in San Francisco and Oakland.

"I'd never spent a night away from home," McLarnin once recalled of that first boat trip. "I weighed 108 pounds and was 4'10" tall."

The young power-puncher quickly made his mark. He was less than two years into his career when he defeated Fidel LaBarba, who had just won an Olympic gold medal in the flyweight division at the 1924 Games.

McLarnin and LaBarba met three times in a three-month span, with McLarnin winning decisions of four and 10 rounds and battling the Olympian to a four-round draw in the middle contest. In the midst of his trilogy with LaBarba, McLarnin also fought a four-round draw with Memphis

Movie star Clark Gable visits McLarnin in 1933 while the fighter was training for a shot at welterweight champion Young Corbett III in Los Angeles. McLarnin came through with a stunning first-round kayo in record time to capture the crown.



McLarnin and Barney Ross exchange lefts (above) during the second of their three-bout series, the only one of the trilogy that McLarnin won. Despite the promoter's attempt to exploit an ethnic rivalry between the Irishman and the Jew, there was clearly no personal animosity between the fighters (bottom).

Pal Moore, a veteran contender who had previously gone 20 rounds with Jimmy Wilde.

While Foster later earned the reputation as a cautious matchmaker, he continued to make tough matches for McLarnin early on. In a seven-month span beginning in June of 1925, McLarnin fought future bantamweight champion Bud Taylor three times, winning once, decisioned flyweight king Pancho Villa, and knocked out gold medalist and future welterweight champ Jackie Fields.

The Villa bout was the first high-profile match of McLarnin's young career. The fight occurred on July 4, 1925, in Emeryville, California. It was reported at the time that Villa had a tooth extracted the morning of the fight, which many believe hampered his ability to perform. Ten days later, Villa died on the operating table, while being treated for blood poisoning caused by an ulcerated tooth. The bout against Villa was a non-title contest, but some reports suggest that Villa's title would have been at stake had McLarnin been able to make the 112-pound flyweight limit.

In 1927, Foster decided to travel east, and the move made McLarnin into a legitimate star. In Chicago, he knocked out former featherweight champ Louis "Kid" Kaplan, and in New York he starched lightweight contender Sid Terris in one round.

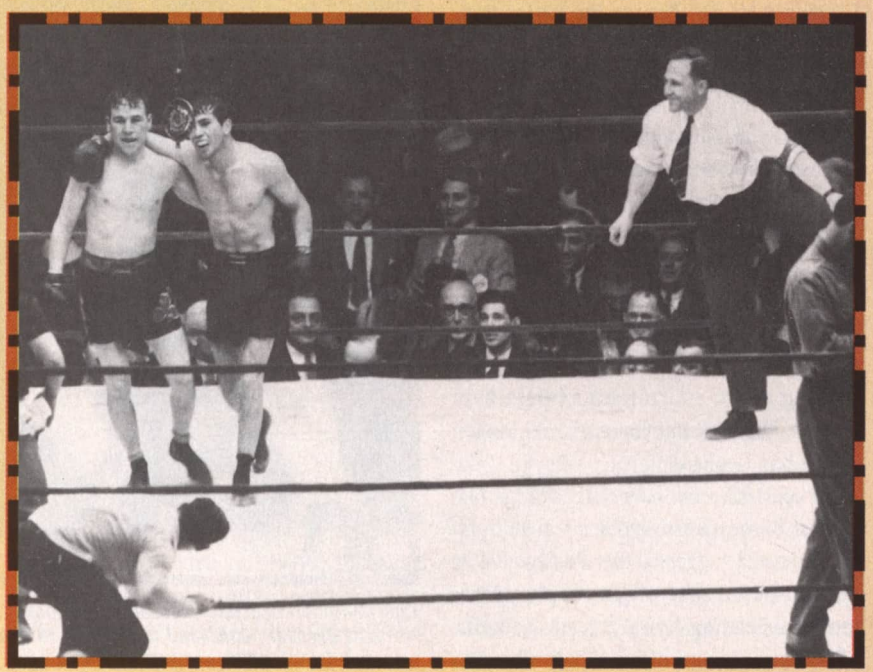
Under Foster's tutelage, McLarnin developed into a dangerous puncher. He did most of his damage with the right cross, but in his prime he was equally dangerous with his left hook. The excitement that followed this pint-sized powerpuncher from the West helped secure a lightweight title bout against Sammy Mandell in 1928 at Madison Square Garden. Mandell won a 15-round decision, but would lose a pair of 10-round non-title bouts to McLarnin over the next 22 months.

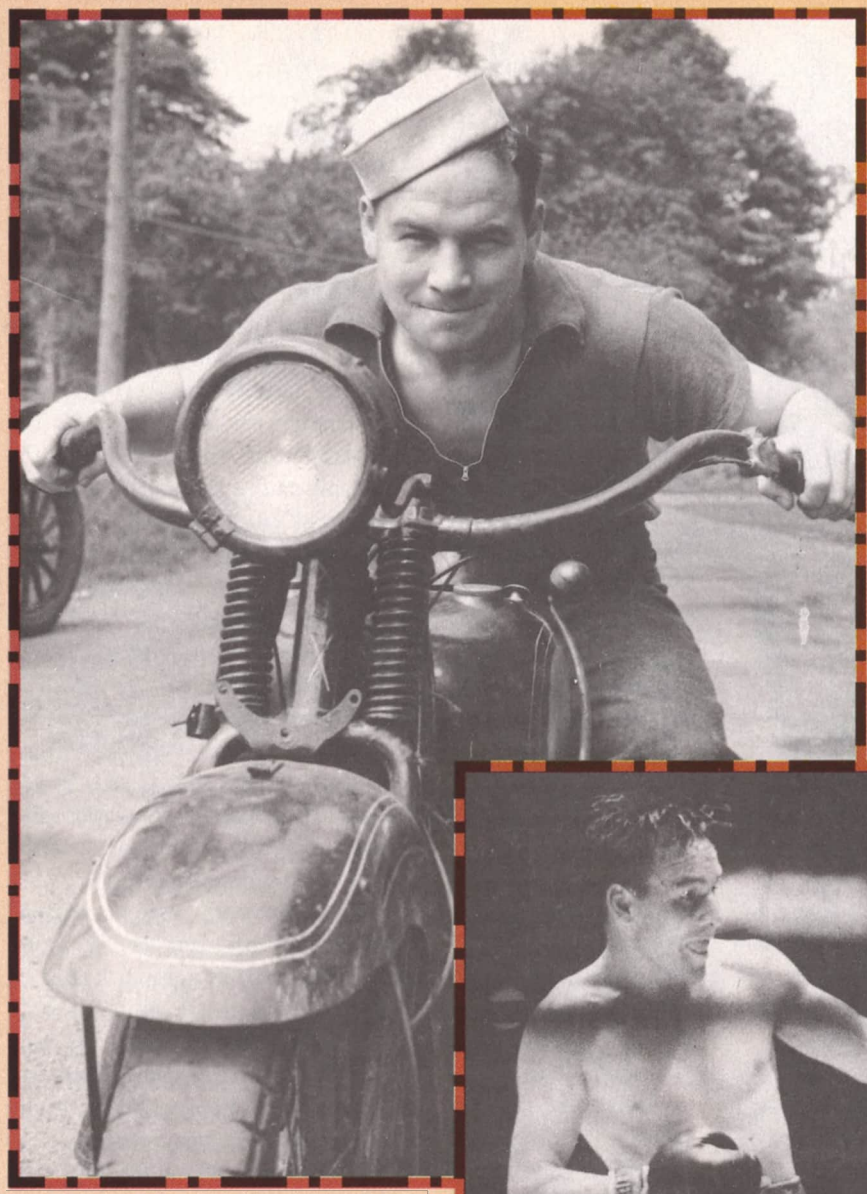
"I was a natural right-hander," McLarnin once said. "I had no problem throwing my right hand. But Pop worked on my left hand for two years before he even let me turn pro."

A hard-hitting Irish fighter made for good copy, particularly in an era during which boxing thrived on ethnic matchups. It was hardly unusual for promoters to hype a bout between an Irish and Jewish fighter, an Italian against an African-American, and so on. But promoter Tex Rickard took this tactic to an extreme, often referring to McLarnin as "The Jew Killer."

Rickard sold McLarnin to New York's teeming Irish-Catholic population as a powerpunching leprechaun straight out of Dublin. The masses ate it up, and McLarnin became a huge attraction. Although he was fighting throughout the Great Depression, he generated gates of $100,000 or more on five occasions. At a time when the average American was making $1,350 a year, McLarnin was pocketing a minimum of $20,000 per fight (roughly $220,000 in today's dollars).

The truth, however, was that McLarnin





Looking a bit like Popeye the Sailor Man, McLarnin roars down a country road near his training camp in Orangeburg, New Jersey, while getting ready for his second fight with Ross.

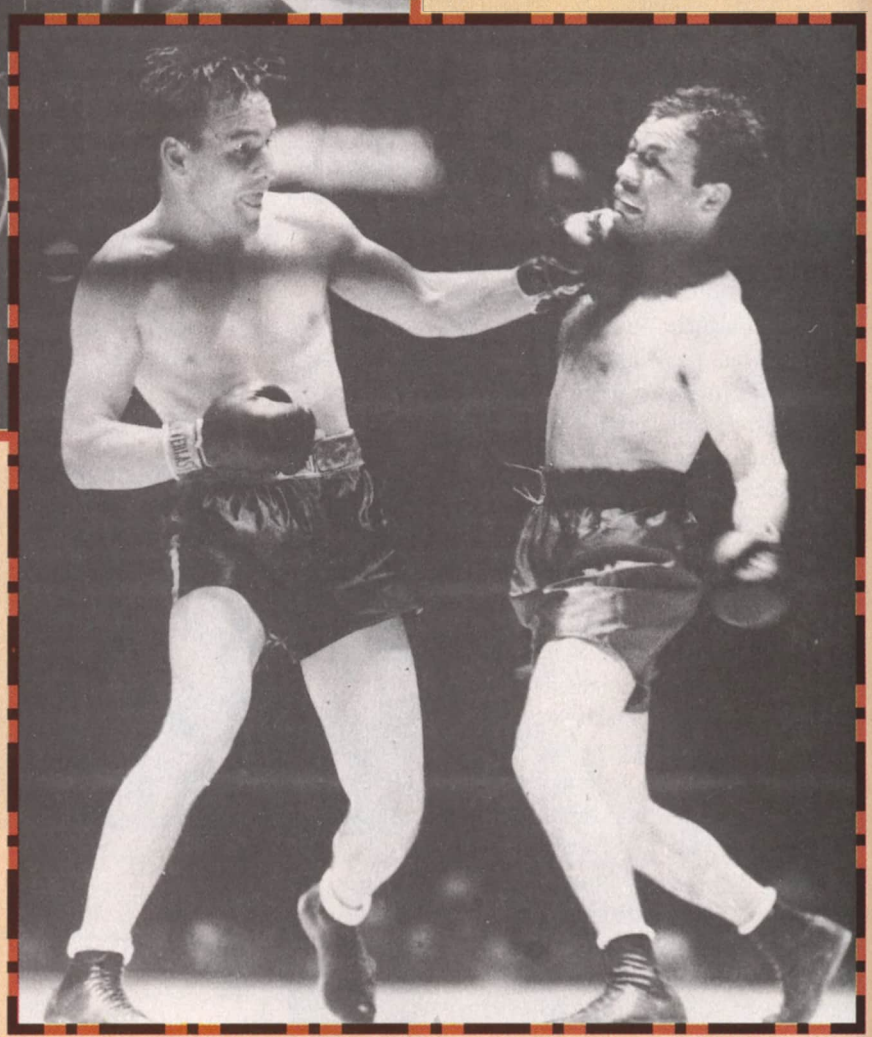
was born in Inchacore, which is near Belfast, in Northern Ireland. He was actually a Protestant and he had never even been to Dublin. And while Rickard matched McLarnin cleverly, there were simply many outstanding Jewish fighters in that era. To his credit, McLarnin fought most of them. He also made a habit of beating them, scoring knockouts over Kaplan, Terris, Ruby Goldstein, Al Singer, and Benny Leonard.

When McLarnin later defended his title against Barney Ross, another Jewish fighter, the media suggested that Ross would be out for the revenge of his people. It was more misleading hype. By all accounts, McLarnin was an affable pug who was quick with a smile. In fact, prior to one of their bouts, Ross called him, "a lovely fellow."

McLarnin captured the welterweight title on May 29, 1933, scoring a stunning knockout of champion Young Corbett III with a single left hook. The bout lasted just 2 minutes 37 seconds, which at the time was the shortest welterweight title fight on record.

Yet it was the three McLarnin-Ross fights that immortalized the fighter from Northern Ireland.

The Hall of Famers battled 45 rounds within the course of 12 months. The first bout took place on May 28, 1934, at the Madison Square Garden Bowl before 60,000 fans. It was McLarnin's first title defense, and although he dropped Ross in the ninth round, it was the challenger who came away with a split decision after 15 rounds of unrelenting give and take.



Tony Canzoneri runs into a McLarnin left hook in their second fight, which was won by McLarnin via 10-round decision. Canzoneri was one of 10 future Hall of Famers whom McLarnin beat. McLarnin was enshrined in 1991, one year after Canzoneri.

The rematch came on September 17, 1934, at the same site. This time McLarnin pressed the attack for the duration of the fight and regained his title via split decision. The third and final bout took place on May 28, 1935, at the Polo Grounds, where Ross earned a unanimous decision. The referee was Jack Dempsey, who scored seven of the 15 rounds even.

"I think Jimmy won the fight," argued Foster after the bout. "But I won't let him fight anymore. He's through with boxing."

Foster, known in the press as a "nickle-nurser," had invested much of his own and McLarnin's money in oil ventures back in California. From a financial standpoint, McLarnin certainly did not need to fight. But the competitive fire still burned within him.

The retirement lasted nearly a year before McLarnin returned to meet Tony Canzoneri. After Baby Face dropped a 10-round decision, Foster insisted on retirement. McLarnin insisted on a rematch and beat Canzoneri the second time around. Although a fourth fight against Ross was in the making, Foster was still preaching retirement, and McLarnin finally listened. The final fight of his career took place on November 20, 1936, when he beat Lou Ambers, the reigning lightweight champ, in a 10-round bout. He was through fighting at the age of 29, and his gross ring earnings were listed anywhere from $500,000 to $800,000.

The remaining debate surrounding McLarnin is whether or not he built his reputation by feasting on small opponents. For instance, he outweighed Sammy Fuller by nine pounds and Singer by four pounds. In newspaper accounts of that era, Foster was routinely criticized for accepting fights against lightweights who agreed to fight McLarnin merely for the large payday. They began to call the fights "Pop Foster Handicaps."

In his three bouts with Billy Petrolle, of which he won two, McLarnin had weight advantages of three, four, and five pounds. In the two fights against Canzoneri, he outweighed his rival by eight and 6½ pounds. While those facts are compelling, there are enough significant fights in which he gave away pounds to offset the criticism. In a range from a half pound to three pounds, McLarnin weighed less than Goldstein, Sammy Baker, Leonard (who, was past his prime), Kaplan, Corbett III, and Lou Brouillard.

McLarnin became a successful businessman after retiring. When this photo was taken in 1968, the ex-champ was working for the Dyer Plating Co. in Paramount, California. Today, at age 95, he lives with his daughter in the state of Washington.

The bad press hardly bothered Foster, whose only concern was maximizing McLarnin's profits while exposing him to minimum risk. The manager and fighter remained close long after McLarnin left the ring. In 1956, when Foster died, he willed $200,000 to McLarnin and his family.

"Pop really cared about me and he brought me along very carefully," McLarnin said of his manager. "No fighter ever had a better manager than me. I owe a lot to Pop; he was a wonderful man."

After his 62-11-3 (20) career was over, McLarnin succeeded in several business ventures, including a travel agency and a metal plating company. He worked for a bit on the college speaking circuit and spent a lot of time playing in celebrity golf tournaments. He was a regular player in the annual Bing Crosby Celebrity Golf Tournament and shot in the low-70s.

In 1991, McLarnin was enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. He attended his induction ceremony, but now, at the age of 95, he is no longer lucid enough to give interviews.

McLarnin lives in the state of Washington with his youngest daughter, Nancy, who says that her father lives comfortably and happily. And there are still days when his "Baby Face" lights up and his blue eyes sparkle. ■

Robert Cassidy is a former associate editor of this magazine and a regular contributor.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Wladimir Klitschko KO 1 Fabio Moli
Lawrence Clay-Bey KO 3 Carlton Johnson
Ray Mercer KO 3 Mario Cawley
Oleg Maskaev KO 9 Sedreck Fields
Michael Moorer KO 1 Rogerio Lobo
Audley Harrison KO 3 Quinn Navarre
Andre Purlette KO 2 Lionel Butler
Andrew Golota KO 7 Brian Nix
Shannon Briggs KO 3 Wade Lewis
Vladimir Virchis W 12 Julius Francis
Tye Fields W 12 Sherman Williams
Luan Krasniqi W 8 Doug Liggion
Tony Thompson KO 6 Gilbert Martinez
Ray Austin KO 8 Jo-El Scott
Faruq Saleem KO 6 Otis Tisdale
Nicolay Valuev W 8 Bob Mirovic
Friday Ahunanya W 10
Onebo Maxime-Ghahou
David Bostice W 6 Jason Nicholson
Derek Bryant W 6 Barry Lindberger
Calvin Brock KO 6 Shane Swartz
Samuel Peter KO 2 Daniel Frank
James Walton W 10 Sione Asipeli
Thomasz Bonin W 8 Garing Lane
Al Cole W 6 Joe Lenhart
John Poore KO 6 Joe Lenhart
Joe Hipp KO 2 Chris Brown
Willie Chapman KO 4 Todd Diggs
Marcus McGee KO 4 Saladean Sewell
Thomas Hayes KO 1 Chris Koval
Billy Douglas KO 3 Leroy Loscar

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Carl Thompson KO 1 Hastings Rasani
Mark Hobson W 12 Robert Norton
Faustino Gonzales W 6 Julian Letterlough
Alexander Petkovic W 8 Sergio Martin Beaz
Enzo Macarinelli KO 1 Andrei Kiarsten
Earl Morais KO 6 Baldwin Hlongwane

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Zsolt Erdei W 12 Juan Nelongo Perez
Ed Dalton W 12 Rocky Torres
Sammy Merza KO 1 Milton Dave
Allan Green KO 5 James Green

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sven Ottke W 12 Mads Larsen
(Retains IBF & WBA "Super" Titles)
Anthony Mundine W 12 Antwun Echols
(Wins Vacant WBA Title)
Markus Beyer W Disq. 5 Danny Green
(Retains WBC Title)

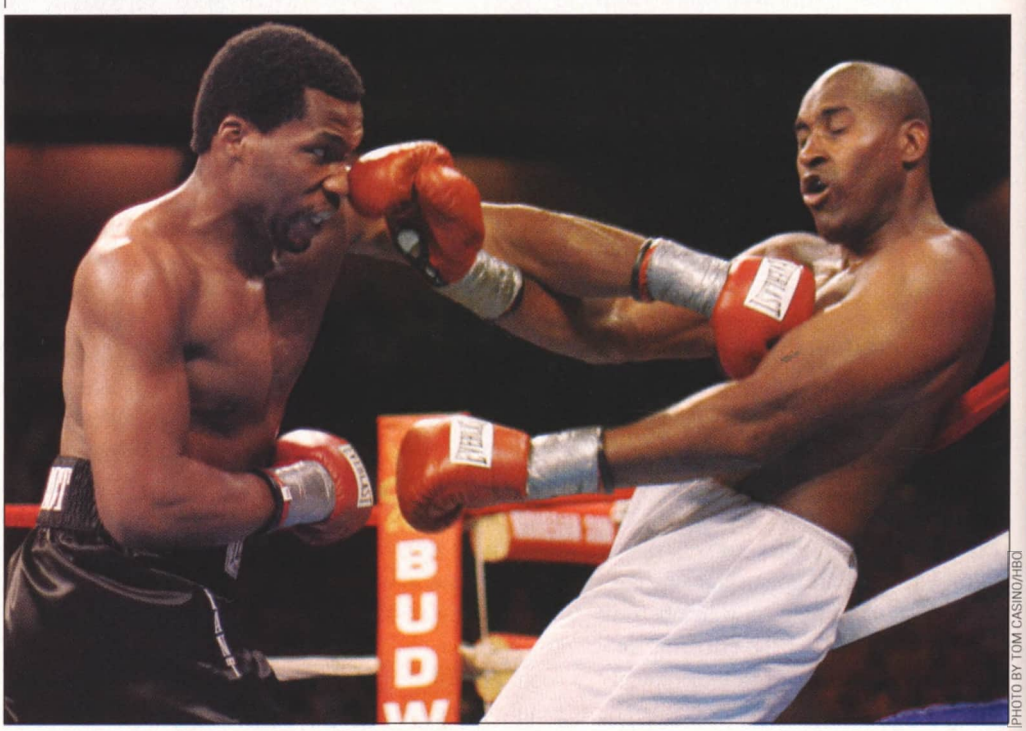


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Heavyweight Derek Bryant bombs Barry Lindberger with a left

Tito Mendoza KO 3 Tyler Hughes
Fighting Nordin W 12 Francisco Mora
Shannan Taylor KO 2 Singkat Pasaribu
Willie Stewart W 10 James Lubwama
Naotaka Hozumi KO 1 Kyonghoon Lee
Brandon Mitchem Tech. Win 6
Levan Easley
Lawrence Chapman D 8 Tyrus Armstead
Vitali Tsypko KO 1 William Ruiz
Denis Inkin KO 7 Jose Hilton Santos
Danny Trevino KO 5 Rogerio Cacciatore
Leonard Pierre W 6 Andres Larrinaga
Yusef Mack W 8 Sam Reese
Edison Miranda KO 5 Darmel Castillo
Laila Ali KO 4 Christy Martin
Ann Wolfe W 10 Valerie Mahfood

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Evans Ashira KO 9 Jerry Elliott
Felix Sturm W 12 Hector Velazco
Kingsley Ikeke KO 6 Kenny Ellis
Marcos Silvano Diaz W 12 Jorge Sclarandi
Sam Soliman W 12 Tokutaro Toyozumi
Takaloo KO 3 Vladimir Borovsky
Rito Ruvalcaba KO 4 Tito Lizarraga
Anthony Bonsante W 8 Reggie Strickland
Cleveland Corder KO 3 Rene Herrera
Rasheem Brown W 6 Monroe Brooks

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Shane Mosley W 12 Oscar De La Hoya
(Wins World Title)
Javier Castillejo KO 2 Ignacio Solar
Kassim Ouma KO 8 Carlos Bojorquez
Verno Phillips W 10 Michael Lerma
Alex Bunema W 6 Daniel Mendez
Jesse Brinkley W 10 Danny Perez
Anthony Bonsante KO 3 Ronnie Martinez
Miguel Angel Gonzalez KO 5
Cristian Solano
Virgil Kalakoda W 10 Kai Kauramaki
J.J. Corn KO 1 Terry Jesmer
Peter Manfredo KO 6 Leonard Townsend
Anthony Thompson KO 5 Dewey Welliver
Anthony Thompson KO 4
Sammy Sparkman
Rasheem Brown KO 3 Mike McFail
Jose Luis Zertuche KO 5 Grady Brewer
Giovanni Lorenzo W 4 Andres Larringa

WELTERWEIGHTS

Jose Rivera W 12 Michel Trabant
(Wins Vacant WBA Title)
Joe Hutchinson KO 8 Hector Quiroz
James Hare KO 2 Jan Bergman
Mike Stewart KO 2 Cornell Shinholster
Chris Smith KO 8 Frankie Sanchez
Kermit Cintron W 10 Jesus Valverde
Alpaslan Aguzum KO 5 Michele Orlando
Jose Celaya KO 7 Wayne Boudreaux
Hiroshi Watanabe W 12 Dondon Sultan
Germaine Sanders KO 6 Jeff Carpenter
Hicket Lau KO 2 Thomas Grissom
Jeffrey Resto W 8 Marteze Logan
Ruben Fuchu KO 5 Luis Alonso
Larry Mosley KO 8 Adan Casillas
James Kirkland KO 1 Martinus Clay

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Miguel Cotto KO 7 Demetrio Ceballos
Alex Trujillo KO 3 Luis Villalta
Patrick Malinga KO 1 Petros Padi
David Diaz W 8 Jauquin Gallardo
Juan Carlos Rodriguez KO 1
Juan Luis Acosta
Andreas Kotelnik KO 8 Laszlo Herczeg
Art Morales D 10 Jesse Feliciano
Julio Aquino KO 4 Darryl Tyson
Antonio Pitalua KO 6 Noel Cortez
Almazbek Raymkulov W 6
Juan Angel Macias
Eduardo Gomez KO 3 Mario Escamilla
Omar Davila W 6 Luis Alonso

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Juan Lazcano KO 11 Stevie Johnston
Juan Manuel Marquez KO 9 Marcos Licona
Aldo Rios W 10 Victor Hugo Paz
Dennis Laurente D 12 Fernando Montilla
Jason Cook KO 3 Vincent Howard
Takehiro Shimada W 10
Tatsuhisa Kawashima
Joey DeRicardo KO 6 Johnny Kim
Chad Brisson KO 2 John Roby
Keita Manabe KO 4
Muanghalek Kiatwichien
Chikashi Inada KO 2 Sandro Marcos
Urbano Antillon KO 6 Martin Bermudez
Adrian Reyes W 6 Yacub Abraham

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Jesus Chavez W 12
Sirimongkol Singmanassak
(Wins WBC Title)
Rocky Juarez KO 1 David Murillo
Joan Guzman KO 1 Alfaro Gonzalez
Eiichi Sugama Tech. Win 8 Jeffrey Onate
Aldo Valtierra KO 2 Jorge Luis Lopez
Jose Cotto KO 1 Johnny Walker
Steven Luevano W 6 Miguel Escamilla
Samuel Kebede KO 3 Aurel Popa
Darling Jimenez W 8 Adam Gonzalez
Carl Johanneson KO 2 Steve Trumble
Verquan Kimbrough W 4 David Maund

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Akihiro Kanai KO 3 Yugo Tsuboi
Humberto Soto W 10 Luis Fuentes
Hector Velazquez W 8 Armando Cordova
Rogers Mtagwa W 10 Isidro Tejedor
Armando Hernandez Tech. Draw 3
Gamaliel Diaz

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Oscar Larios KO 2 Kozo Ishii
(Retains WBC Title)
Heriberto Ruiz W 10 Christobal Cruz
Jorge Lacierva KO 1 Harold Grey
Pedrito Laurente W 12 Manabu Fukushima
Akihiko Nago KO 3 Mikihito Setuo
Fabio Oliva W 10 Rudy Ruiz
Daisuke Yamanaka KO 4
Phisesh Voh Suraphol
Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 7
Marcel Kasimov
Eugenio Gomez KO 1 Wannhin Chuwatana
Sod Looknongyangtoy W 6 Yuri Jakov
Erik Rodriguez W 8 Natalio Ponce
Lucas Mignoni W 6 Mario Quintuman

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Mauricio Martinez KO 5 Ever Garcia
Daniel Ponce DeLeon KO 1
Francisco Tejedor
Chatchai Sasakul W 12 Rey Llagas

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Mark Johnson W 12 Fernando Montiel
Martin Castillo KO 4 Alberto Ontiveros
Jose Navarro W 12 Adonis Rivas
Eiji Kojima W 12 Waenpetch Chuwatana
Jesus Rojas D 10 Edison Torres
Masaki Kawabata KO 2
Prosper Kohei Matsuura

FLYWEIGHTS

Takefumi Sakata KO 7 Kazuo Okada
Angel Priolo W 12 Miguel Del Valle
Noriyuki Komatsu W 12 Masaki Nakanuma
Mercurio Ciaramitaro W 10
Giuseppe Lagana
Ivan Hernandez KO 1 Ruben Poma

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Sarikalek Ekarin KO 5 Jhay Herla
Ulises Solis W 12 Edgar Sosa
Mbulelo Nyanda KO 1
Phatushedzo Nemukongwe

STRAWWEIGHTS

Roberto Leyva KO 5 Marino Montiel
Ivan Calderon W 12 Lorenzo Trejo
Teruo Misawa W 8 Kenichi Kishida

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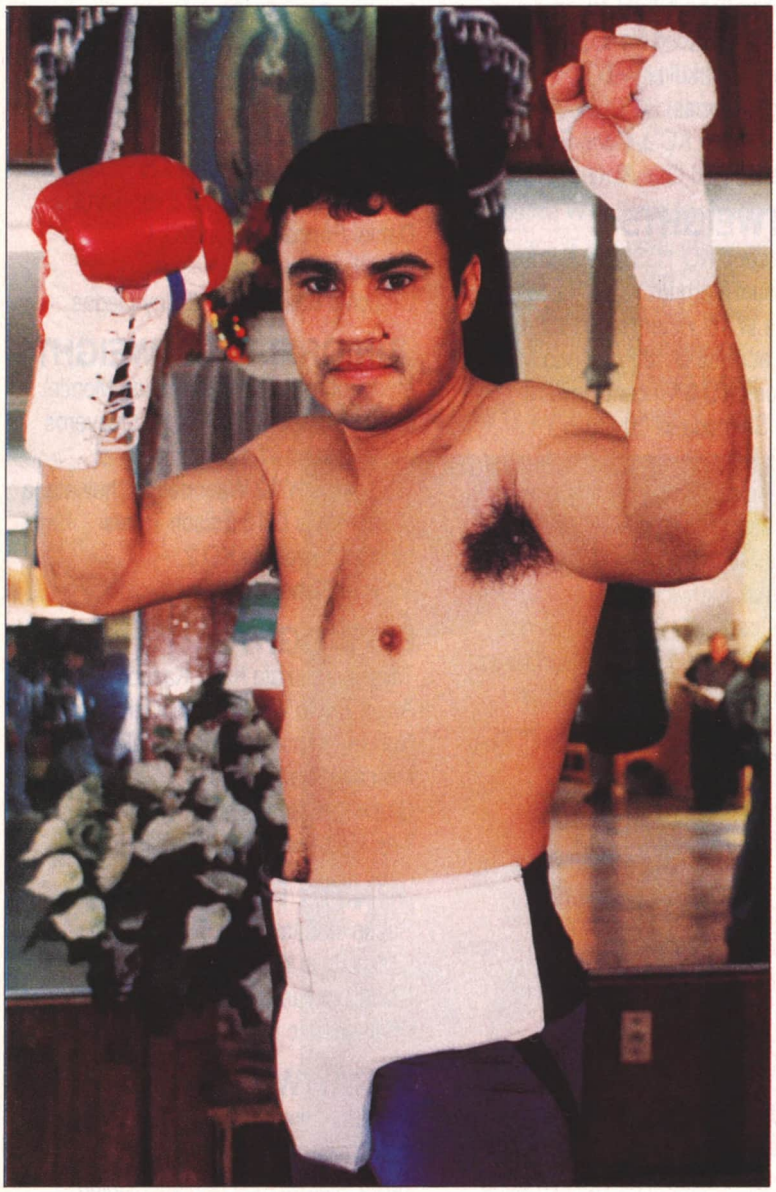
The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH



For years, Jesus Chavez' name has been a part of any discussion about the best active fighters never to hold a major title. Not anymore.

Nine years into a frequently frustrating professional career that included a three-year exile from the United States, a 4½-year reign as the NABF 130-pound titleholder, and a game effort in defeat against pound-for-pounder Floyd Mayweather in his long-awaited first title bid, Chavez finally captured the WBC belt he's been pursuing. And he didn't have the luxury of taking it from a pushover, as two-division titlist Sirimongkol Singmanassak, winner of 40 of 41 fights coming in, was favored in many circles to retain the title against Chavez.

But the Mexican was dominant from the start, sweeping the early rounds with his skillful and busy style and winning enough of the late rounds to prevent Sirimongkol from ever making it close. Although the fight was in Chavez' adopted hometown of Austin, Texas, there was no hometown decision here. The challenger fully deserved the wide verdict in his favor and, a challenger no more, he fully deserves recognition as the Fighter of the Month.

Jesus Chavez

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Acelino Freitas KO 12 Jorge Barrios

Miami, Florida: The arena may have been half-empty, but by the last two rounds of the fight, the crowd that did show up made enough noise to rattle the rafters. And with good reason. With his reign in jeopardy, Freitas rallied and retained the WBA super featherweight title with a thrilling 12th-round TKO of challenger Barrios at the Miami Arena.

The defending titlist expected a tough fight from the colorful but little-known Argentine, and he got it. Freitas, 130, took command early, displaying superior speed, movement, and boxing skills, and Barrios, 129, appeared to be slightly overmatched during the first three rounds. The 27-year-old Brazilian landed a few quick jabs and lead rights and closed round one by stunning Barrios, also 27, with a hard right to the jaw. The ever-attacking Barrios tried to get in gear over the next few rounds and got within range several times, but Freitas put his superior defensive skills on display and scored with hard rights to the head that had Barrios bleeding from the left eyelid by the third round.

Freitas won the fourth round as well, but by the fifth Barrios had picked up the pace and started landing more, especially to the body. "La Hiena" kept the heat on Freitas and closed the seventh with a hard left hook to the head. By the eighth round, "Popo" had slowed, and the momentum had swung in Barrios' favor. Blood flowed from the challenger's wound, but Barrios battled through it and scored a flash knockdown with a straight left in the eighth, though the knockdown was probably due more to the wet logo on the canvas than the punch that Freitas walked into.

An inactive, at times defensive Freitas continued to struggle in the ninth and 10th, and early in the thrilling 11th, a solid left-right to the head dropped Freitas. Fortunately for Freitas, his mouthpiece fell out, prompting referee Jorge Alonso (USA) to call time to have it cleaned. With the additional seconds to clear his head, Freitas was successful in avoiding Barrios' winging shots when the action resumed. He turned a 10-8 round for his opponent in his own favor by landing a crushing right at the bell that first staggered the challenger, then sent him crashing to the canvas.

Barrios beat the count, but was seriously hurt. He was still unsteady when he came out for the 12th, and a revitalized Freitas, 34-0 (31), moved in and dropped him with another hard right. Though the game Barrios, 39-2-1 (29) with 1 no-contest, beat the count, he fell again seconds later without being hit, and the ref promptly halted the action 50 seconds into the round. Through 11 rounds, judge Guy Jutras (Canada) had Barrios ahead 106-104, Dennis Nelson (USA) had it 106-103 for Freitas, and Peter Trematerra (USA) saw it even at 105-105.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Banner Promotions

(8-9-03)

Ed Maloney

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Freitas and Barrios go to war

Teddy Reid KO 4 Elio Ortiz

Miami, Florida: In the co-feature to the Acelino Freitas-Jorge Barrios bout at the Miami Arena, Reid successfully defended his NABF welterweight crown with an action-packed fourth-round kayo of Ortiz in what might be termed a minor upset. Ortiz was coming off a good win over Ray Oliveira, but Reid's tremendous punching power halted the Venezuelan's six-fight unbeaten streak and allowed the 32-year-old Reid to replace Ortiz in THE RING'S welterweight ratings.

The tone of the bout was set just 25 seconds after the opening bell when the sleek-looking Reid, 147, Adelphi, Maryland, dropped Ortiz, 146½, Miami, Florida, via Venezuela, with a hard right. Ortiz rose, but Reid smelled blood. He stalked Ortiz and was measuring him for the big punch that would end the bout. And he nearly did just that when he scored another knockdown with another right hand late in the round.

Reid dropped Ortiz again early in the second, and victory seemed imminent. But after the action was halted briefly when Ortiz' mouthpiece fell out, the tide turned. The 29-year-old Venezuelan scored with several bodyshots that had Reid backpedaling and covering up.

Reid came out revived in round three, and his right hand was once again finding its target. But Ortiz responded to Reid's offensive with some powershots of his own, which rocked Reid and nearly knocked him through the ropes late in the entertaining round.

They exchanged hard punches throughout the fourth—and not one of them was a jab. Both men seemed ready to go. And it was Reid who took advantage of that. Late in the round, another right to the head dropped Ortiz for the

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Reid's right hand gave Ortiz major problems

fourth time in the fight. And this time, Reid, 22-5-1 (16), did not pause to admire his work as he had earlier in the fight. He jumped on Ortiz, 24-6 (18) with 1 no-contest, and dropped him with another hard right to the head, and referee Bill Connors (USA) halted the action with two seconds left in the round.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Banner Promotions

(8-9-03)

Ed Maloney

Jesus Chavez W 12 Sirimongkol Singmanassak

Austin, Texas: Chavez added a triumphant episode to his movie-script life by winning the WBC super featherweight title from Sirimongkol in front of a sold-out hometown crowd of 4,100 at the Austin Convention Center. The Mexico-born Texan overwhelmed his opponent throughout the bout with unyielding pressure coupled with a frenetic punch output.

Chavez, 130, dominated the first four rounds, swarming all over Sirimongkol, 130, Thailand, with an assortment of jabs, hooks, and right hands. Fighting for the first time in the United States, the defending titleholder appeared tense and amateurish as he backpedaled away from the aggressive challenger.

While Chavez, 30, rammed in debilitating hooks to the body and jarring blows upstairs, Sirimongkol seemed reluctant to plant his feet and commit to his punches. His feeble jabs merely dabbed Chavez on the face, allowing the challenger to unload his combination of choice—left hook-overhand right—with virtual impunity as the fight approached its halfway mark.

Sirimongkol, 26, finally began getting into a rhythm in rounds five and six when he found his range for sneaky one-two combinations and stiff counter rights to the head. Still, it was Chavez who remained the busier fighter as he continued to jab his way inside before ripping in hooks and uppercuts.

Defying the conventional wisdom of boxing, Chavez, 40-2 (28), almost always beat his straight-punching opponent to the draw with looping, roundhouse blows from various angles. He relentlessly pursued a retreating Sirimongkol, 40-2 (23), around the ring in rounds eight and nine with power punches that opened a cut above the titleholder's right eye. The outgunned Thai fighter kept things competitive by catching Chavez coming in with straight rights and right uppercuts, but they were too rare to change the momentum of the fight.

A left hook in the 10th wobbled Sirimongkol, and Chavez immediately pounced on his unsteady foe with a followup flurry. Only in the sport of boxing can a moment of grogginess be a wakeup call, and that's exactly what it was for Sirimongkol. He not only survived the barrage, but stopped Chavez in his tracks with a few well-timed right hands at round's end.

The final two rounds saw the defending titleholder stand his ground, trade with Chavez, and get the better of the toe-to-toe exchanges with the sharper, cleaner hooks and crosses. Curiously enough, Chavez had more difficulty finding his mark against a stationary target than he did a retreating one, and was jolted with a solid counter each time he missed. Had Sirimongkol abandoned the futile stick-and-move game plan earlier in the fight, he might have kept his title. But his rally fell far short and he returned to Thailand without his belt.

Judges Ken Morita (Japan) and Gale Van Hoy (USA) scored the fight 117-111, while John Keane (England) had it 118-110, all for Chavez. THE RING had Chavez winning by 118-111. Laurence Cole (USA) refereed.

"Against Floyd Mayweather, I wanted to win too much. I tried too hard. I was nervous," Chavez said, referring to his failed try for the same belt in 2001. "That wasn't the case in this fight. I came out strong and went right to the attack. My plan was to back him up so he couldn't get his right hand working. On the videotapes we studied, he was a very big right-hand puncher."

It is expected that Chavez' next fight, and first defense, will be in Austin as well, with a money fight against Erik Morales likely to follow.

Television: Telefutura

Promoter: Top Rank

(8-15-03)

Peter Lim

Manny Pacquiao KO 3 Emmanuel Lucero

Los Angeles, California: The more we see of "Pac-Man" Pacquiao, the more impressed we are. He has the kind of punch

that doesn't just stop his opponent; it leaves him looking around for the 18-wheeler that must have just slammed into his head.

In this case, the opponent was a tough kid out of Mexico who makes his home in the Bronx, New York, and is heavier on attitude than talent. But Lucero, 21-1-1 (12), very much aware of Pacquiao's thunder, fought much of the scheduled 12-rounder bobbing and weaving like he was trying to get under a coffee table.

The boisterous, largely Hispanic crowd at the Grand Olympic Auditorium was peppered with movie stars and sports personalities. They were mostly there to see Fernando Vargas take on Fitz Vanderpool. This co-feature was a bonus glimpse at another young boxing star.

Every once in a while, Lucero, 121¼, threw a punch at his Filipino stalker, usually a wild haymaker. This was no way to beat the IBF junior featherweight titlist, but it did amuse Pacquiao, 120, and excite the sold-out crowd of 6,500.

The 24-year-old southpaw beltholder circled and bided his time, connecting with an occasional bodyshot. It's more tiring to do a knee-high bob-and-weave than it is to throw punches. Clearly this could not continue for 12 rounds.

Lucero, also 24, conquered his butterflies and assumed more of a traditional fighting stance as the bout progressed. But it made him vulnerable to counters that landed like bricks. To his credit, Lucero tried counters of his own.

This fight had to end with a kayo. That was clear. Yet the end came as a surprise anyway. Catching Lucero near the ropes, Pacquiao, 37-2-1 (28), found the split-second opening he was seeking and looped a left that landed square on the side of Lucero's jaw. The force of the punch spun him around. His wits gone, Lucero sank to his knees as referee Jose Cobian (USA) jumped in and waved it off at 2:12 of round three. Lucero's corner did not complain about the stoppage.

Immediately after the fight, Marco Antonio Barrera, THE RING'S featherweight champion, challenged Pacquiao to move up to 126 and fight him. When no-nonsense Barrera makes a challenge, he's not doing it just for media attention. As of this writing, Barrera and Pacquiao were just about signed for a match in Las Vegas on November 15. How could it possibly miss?

Television: HBO

Promoter: Main Events in association with M&M Sports

(7-26-03)

Ivan Goldman

Markus Beyer W Disq. 5 Danny Green

Nuremburg, Germany: There was very little that Green, 167½, Australia, did wrong in the first four rounds of his challenge of WBC super middleweight titleholder Beyer, 167½, Germany, in front of a crowd of 4,000 at the Nurburgring. In fact, with knockdowns in each of the first two rounds, he seemed to be on his way to victory. His mistake was to use his head, physically rather than figuratively, in the fifth, and all that he worked for so productively was undone. But this was far from clear immediately.

Confusion reigned as American referee Bill Clancy indicated initially that they would go to the judges' scorecards after what he described as "a flagrant headbutt" by Green in the fifth round that left blood streaming from a cut above Beyer's right eye (reminiscent of the wound that brought a halt to Lennox Lewis' bout with Vitali Klitschko in June). However, Clancy failed to acknowledge that the laceration was originally caused by a punch in the second round, ruling instead that a headbutt about a minute into the fifth was responsible. When Green butted Beyer again with 19 seconds left in the round, Clancy was clear in his directions to the officials at ringside.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Pacquiao fends off one of Lucero's awkward attempts

"Two-point deduction, intentional headbutt. Go to the scorecards," he said.

There then followed 10 minutes of heated discussions between the officials and the camps of both fighters, and the upshot was that Clancy reversed his decision and disqualified Green, saying to officials after careful reading of the rulebook: "No, you're right. It is the rule." But Green's manager and trainer, Hall of Fame ex-titleholder Jeff Fenech, was livid. "It was already cut and you know that," he said.

Clancy, however, did not make this clear after the blood began to flow down Beyer's

face in the second round. The German was being well-controlled at this point, having already had to climb off the canvas.

"I was totally on top and the cut was caused in the second round by a punch, no question," said Green, 16-1 (16). "It was a clean left hook. It was a clean punch that opened the cut. He headbutted me as many times as I headbutted him. The last one was an unintentional headbutt. It may have been careless or reckless in their view, but it wasn't intentional. I'm not out there to headbutt anyone. I was doing the job with my fists."

He certainly was, and the anxiety in the 32-year-old German's corner was apparent. But with a minute gone in the fifth round, the fighters came close together before Beyer, 28-1 (11), fell to the canvas from a Green push. The referee then indicated, despite Green's protests, that the cut above Beyer's right eye was from a head clash and not from the left that landed earlier in the fight. With the clock ticking down toward the end of the round, a blatant butt was landed on Beyer and the referee intervened. Even with the two-point deduction, 30-year-old Green, who has been a professional for just a little more than two years, was ahead on points.

"He was constantly fighting unfairly," said Beyer, who surely knew how lucky he was. A rematch was being sought by the Australian's camp, though it's possible that Beyer will first fight number-one rated Eric Lucas, against whom the German won a hugely controversial decision in April '03 to capture the belt. Both Lucas and Green deserve second chances after Beyer's back-to-back lucky escapes.

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland
(8-16-03)
Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Marquez pops overmatched Licona with a right

Juan Manuel Marquez KO 9 Marcos Licona

Uncasville, Connecticut: They first offered us 12 rounds of Marquez vs. Derrick Gainer as our main entree, a splendid taste of two top featherweights, seemingly evenly matched, in an HBO *Boxing After Dark* headliner.

But when Gainer pulled out with a torn pectoral muscle less than two weeks before the fight, it gave a young, unripe challenger the opportunity to flex his own muscles. Unfortunately, the replacement, the little-known Licona of Westminster, California, didn't provide the spicy kick we were looking for.

Originally inked as the main event, Marquez-Licona was later reduced to the appetizer leading into Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson's junior bantamweight battle with Fernando Montiel. And as it turned out, this over-the-weight, non-title bout (Marquez holds the IBF 126-pound belt) was far from appetizing.

Licona, a decent but unmemorable fighter who had never been kayoed, was met in the opening rounds with a chorus of boos as he flapped about the ring like a lifeless fish. Taking the bout on short notice and weighing in at a career-high 133½, Licona simply wasn't in fighting shape.

Meanwhile, Marquez, who stepped on the scale fully clothed to bulk up to 132, did little to offset his opponent's reluctance, as the two settled into a dance that brought on more bore than gore. The rounds tilted in Marquez' favor, but he was boxing too cautiously to prevent the impatient crowd from booing.

It wasn't until a five-punch flurry in round four that the Mohegan Sun faithful was finally jarred awake, as Marquez, 29, offered Licona, 28, his first serving of fist filet. But the rally was short lived. Still, Marquez' jab was slowly turning Licona's nose into a ripe strawberry, and a steady body attack was reducing his legs to limp noodles.

With Licona noticeably waning, Marquez stepped it up in the eighth round, unloading the only bomb of the fight—a thudding right uppercut—on his opponent's chops. Floored by the punch (the only knockdown of the fight), Licona popped back up just in time for the bell to intervene, perhaps saving him from a fight-ending onslaught.

However, that would come in the very next round, as Marquez laid all his gravy on him, punishing Licona with sharp combinations and turning his face into a mass of confusion and doubt. Hence, it wasn't so hard to digest when referee Richard Flaherty (USA), acting on the advice of the ring doctor, halted the bout before the start of round 10.

Although Marquez was pitching a shutout on all three scorecards at the time of the stoppage, his performance with the second-rate stand-in did little to enhance his appeal. While he can be entertaining with the right opponents, he can be dreadful with the wrong ones, as his bout with Freddie Norwood four years prior to this one plainly illustrated.

Sure, Marquez, 41-2 (33), ultimately had Licona, 20-4-1 (7), for dessert, but his serving on this night still left the hungry feeling a tad undernourished.

Promoter: DiBella Entertainment
(8-16-03)
Ted Bodenrader ■

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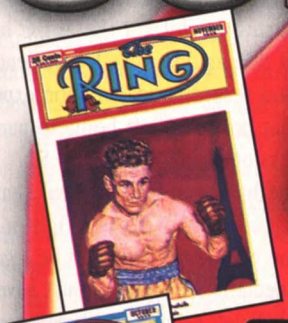
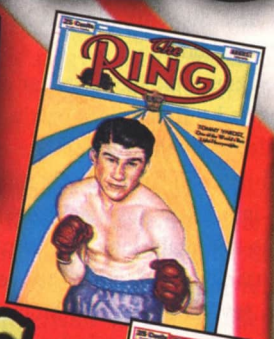
1940s RING MAGAZINES DISCOVERED!





An archaeologist expedition through our vast warehouse uncovered what even we didn't know existed: vintage *Ring* magazines from the 1940s. Most are in very good condition. The supply on these rare collectors' items is very small and they will go quickly!

May 1949: Kid Gavilan, Joe Louis, Joe Walcott, technical boxers, "Pedlar" Palmer, Battling Levinsky, Fighter of the Month: Laurent Dauthuille.

July 1949: Willie Pep, Louis' successor, Ray Robinson, Jack Dempsey, Mike Jacobs, Gentleman Jim Savage, Harry S. Sharpe, Walker Law, Nat Fleischer remembers, Fighter of the Month: Honore Pratesi.

August 1949: Tommy Yarosz, Al Weill, LaMotta-Cerdan, Billy Bennett, [illegible] Nat Fleischer remembers, Fighter of the Month: Bruce Woodcock.

September 1949: Rocky Graziano, Robinson-Gavilan, Jake LaMotta, Richie Mitchell, Patsy Haley, Nat Fleischer remembers, Fighter of the Month: Ezzard Charles.

October 1949: Jake LaMotta, James D. Norris, Charles-Lesnevich, Laurent Dauthuille, Ike Williams, [illegible] Reddy, Inside boxers, Nat Fleischer remembers, Fighter of the Month: Ezzard Charles.

November 1949: Laurent Dauthuille, Mike Jacobs, Graziano-Fusari, Robinson-Belloise, young heavyweights, Young Brion, Johnny Indrisano & Lionel Canegata, McCarty-Palzer, Nat Fleischer remembers, Fighter of the Month: Sugar Ray Robinson

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New Face

(Continued from page 24)

not allow that." Turning to Dunne's handlers, he added: "I want to see this kid when he's 80 years old and has children and grandchildren."

To Dunne, the blow was far worse than any he had suffered since making his amateur debut at the tender age of seven. Could it be all over, at 22, and just two fights into his professional career? All his dreams and ambitions, the conviction of his boxing-mad family (as well as his father, several uncles and brothers boxed, and even his mother's brother, Eddie Hayden, was a former Irish amateur champion) that he would achieve more than any of them, were they now to be dashed on the results of an inconclusive scan?

Rather than undergo further tests in New York, Dunne and his handlers decided to put their trust in the neurological staff at the University of California in Los Angeles, near where he lives in Santa Monica. Exhaustive tests yielded the results he hoped for and expected. He was given a clear bill of health. But the commission doctors in New York would still have the final say on whether he could resume his career.

He was back home in Dublin for Christmas when he got the best gift he could have wished for. Relaxing in a cinema with his girlfriend Pamela, whom he plans to marry in January, a message from his manager came through on his mobile phone. He was told that the New York Commission had lifted his suspension.

"I let out a scream of delight, and there were one or two people in the cinema not amused," he recalled. "I couldn't believe such a weight had been lifted off my shoulders, even if I never thought there was anything wrong with me and I was always confident I would be able to box again."

Dunne paid tribute to Wayne McCullough, who had been out of boxing for two years following a brain scare, for offering him much-needed comfort and assurance during his traumatic period. As a cocky 16-year-old, Bernard had sparred with McCullough when "The Pocket Rocket" was preparing to defend the WBC bantamweight title against Jose Luis Bueno in Dublin, and they shared common experience in that both had left home to pursue their professional careers in the U.S.

"Wayne has been great, a real gentleman," he said. "Will I ever fight him? Well, some people say it would be a great match, especially in Ireland, but I haven't reached his level. Maybe we'll meet somewhere down the line, you never know."

Perhaps the most relieved person, outside of Team Dunne and the fighter's family, was Leonard. The ring legend said on signing him to a three-year, 21-fight contract in October 2002: "I think Ben (the name Dunne goes by in America) will be

Team Dunne, from left to right: Manager Brian Peters, promoter Sugar Ray Leonard, Dunne, and trainer Freddie Roach. Leonard, who signed the fighter to a three-year deal back in October 2002, believes Dunne will be world champion within two years.

world champion in two or three years. What I like most about him is that champion's heart and desire he has. He wants to succeed. He wants to win."

So far, that will to win, backed by supreme confidence, good skills and movement, power in both hands, and a willingness to listen to top-flight trainer Freddie Roach's advice, has carried Dunne through an eight-fight winning run, with only one lasting beyond the second round. Too easy? Danger of complacency? Both Leonard and Dunne's Irish manager, Brian Peters, reject criticism that he has been fed soft touches so far.

"Ben has been so impressive with each win," said Leonard. "Each time he steps out we've raised the bar a notch or two, and he has passed every test."

"Tougher opponents will come, but only when we're ready," said Peters. "We're in no hurry. Remember that Sugar Ray Leonard didn't fight for a world title until his 26th bout."

Peters, a successful bar owner and occasional boxing promoter, recognized Dunne's potential after an impressive amateur career that saw him win three Irish senior titles, the first when he was just 17, and finish his unpaid stint with a 119-11 record. Although he served Ireland with honor in international competition, he missed out on the Olympics, unlike his father, Brendan, who took part in the 1976 Games. Few neutral observers at the Montreal tournament took much notice as the elder Dunne made his exit in a second-round light flyweight bout, but they couldn't take their eyes off exciting American star Ray Leonard as he cruised to the light welterweight gold medal without losing a round in his six contests.

"I wasn't even born when my father went to Montreal, but I learned all about Sugar Ray as I grew up and developed an interest in boxing," said Bernard. "He was one of my idols, and I couldn't believe it when he came around to my Santa Monica apartment for tea, discussed business with Brian Peters, and then we signed the contract. Ray has been very good. He's always there to give me advice and help me along."

Initially, Dunne was promoted by Mat Tinley, founder of America Presents, who had another Irish fighter, McCullough, on his roster. But, after an eye-catching second round kayo of Rodrigo Ortiz in his debut just before Christmas in '01, the barely-settled young immigrant's plans were thrown into turmoil when Tinley's outfit collapsed in a financial crisis. It was eight months before Dunne climbed back into the ring, to dispatch Cristian Cabrera with a single right hand, again in the second round. The fight, at Foxwoods Resort and Casino in Ledyard, Connecticut, was seen across the nation as part of SRL Boxing's ESPN-televised card. First to jump into the ring to congratulate the winner was Leonard, who exclaimed, "Wow, where did you learn to punch like that? We'll have to talk."

Talk they did, and the new Team Dunne was soon ready for takeoff.

After his enforced five-month break, it was back to business three days into 2003, as the pale, deceptively thin Irishman bombed out Simon Ramirez inside a round. A month later, Eric Trujillo made an equally quick exit. Oscar Villa, with just two wins in 14 fights, looked set to go the same way when he was floored in the opening round. But the Mexican based in Orange County gamely survived the four rounds to lose 40-35 on all cards. It's the only time Dunne has been taken the distance so far.

Oscar Rosales, who had lasted into the fifth with ex-Olympian Almazbek Raimkulov, was overwhelmed by a blistering Dunne barrage and counted out in the first. Hoping to do better, Louisville, Kentucky's Terrell Hargrove soon learned otherwise as he sank to the canvas from a lethal combination after just two minutes of one-sided action.

For his first scheduled eight-rounder, Dunne was pitted against Mario Lacey, from Mobile, Alabama, whose only loss in 10 fights was a no-disgrace first-round hammering by hot prospect Francisco "Panchito" Bojado in '01. It looked like Lacey might give Dunne something to think about when he nailed him with a stinging right and boxed well for the first minute. But a swift hook dropped Lacey, who got up at six pawing at his right eye, which was bleeding. Dunne tore after him, landing three hooks to the head, and then buried a paralyzing left uppercut into his body for the finish. It was three minutes before Lacey, still grimacing with pain, got back to his feet and was led to his corner.

If his opponents to date haven't given him very much to do, Dunne feels he has learned lots from sparring with the likes of Manny Pacquiao, Willie Jorrin, Johnny Tapia, Israel Vasquez, and even Sugar Shane Mosley.

"These guys have been in with the best, and I'm holding my own with them," he said. "They are even asking for me to spar with them. It's very exciting, and Freddie Roach tells me he's delighted with my progress."

It's been 18 years since McGuigan sent the Irish into ecstatic celebrations with his memorable victory over Eusebio Pedroza to capture the WBA featherweight title. Now they think they may have found a worthy successor to "The Clones Cyclone." Dunne, no shrinking violet when it comes to estimating his own ability, thinks he can do even better than McGuigan.

"I want to be remembered as the best fighter ever to come out of Ireland," he said. ■

Patrick Myler is a freelance writer based in Dublin, Ireland, and an occasional contributor to this magazine.

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ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of June 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Vacant
2. David Tua (NZ)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. John Ruiz (USA)
5. Mike Tyson (USA)
6. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
7. Evander Holyfield (USA)
8. Fres Oquendo (PR)
9. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
10. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Joe Mesi (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
7. Valery Brudov (RUS)
8. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
9. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
10. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
11. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
12. Alexander Petkovic (GER)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Lou Del Valle (USA)
3. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
4. Manuel Siaca (PR)
5. Bruno Girard (FRA)
6. David Telesco (USA)
7. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
8. George Jones (USA)
9. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
10. Montell Griffin (USA)
11. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
12. Stipe Drews (CRO)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
5. Eric Lucas (CAN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Byron Mitchell (USA)
8. Thomas Tate (USA)
9. Brian Magee (GB)
10. Francisco Mora (ARG)
11. Charles Brewer (USA)
12. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Evans Ashira (DEN)
7. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
8. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
9. Jermain Taylor (USA)
10. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
11. Wayne Alexander (GB)
12. Derrell Coley (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Champ: Alejandro T. Garcia (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
3. Travis Simms (USA)
4. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
5. Shane Mosley (USA)
6. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
7. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
8. J.C. Candelo (COL)
9. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
10. Kassim Ouma (GHA)
11. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
12. Michael Rask (DEN)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Vernon Forrest (USA)
6. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
7. Felix Flores (PR)
8. James Hare (GB)
9. Kermit Cintron (PR)
10. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
11. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
12. Elio Ortiz (VEN)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
7. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
8. Zab Judah (USA)
9. Miguel Cotto (PR)
10. Randall Bailey (USA)
11. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
12. Andreas Kotelnik (GER)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Lakva Sim (MON)
4. Juan Lazcano (USA)
5. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Phillip Ndou (SA)
8. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
9. Angel Manfredy (USA)
10. Michael Clark (USA)
11. Julio Diaz (MEX)
12. Billy Irwin (CAN)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
3. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
4. Diego Corrales (USA)
5. Jesus Chavez (MEX)
6. Randy Suico (PHIL)
7. Steve Forbes (USA)
8. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
9. Nate Campbell (USA)
10. Cassius Baloyi (SA)
11. Alex Arthur (GB)
12. Mike Anchondo (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Injin Chi (KOR)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Chris John (IND)
6. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
7. Michael Brodie (GB)
8. Spend Abazi (DEN)
9. Victor Polo (COL)
10. Oscar Leon (COL)
11. William Abelyan (ARM)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
3. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
4. Osamu Sato (JAP)
5. Yober Ortega (VEN)
6. Jose Rojas (VEN)
7. Paulie Ayala (USA)
8. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Johnny Armour (GB)
10. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
11. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
12. Emmanuel Lucero (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Tim Austin (USA)
4. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
5. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
6. Leo Gamez (VEN)
7. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
8. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
9. Diego Morales (MEX)
10. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
11. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
12. Moises Castro (NIC)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
3. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
4. Kohei Matsuura (JAP)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
7. Jose Navarro (USA)
8. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
9. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
10. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
11. Gabula Vabaza (SA)
12. Martin Castillo (MEX)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
4. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
5. Damaen Kelly (GB)
6. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
7. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
8. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
9. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
10. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
11. Brian Viloria (USA)
12. Isidro Garcia (MEX)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
3. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
4. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
5. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
6. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
9. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
10. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)
11. Alex Sanchez (PR)
12. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
5. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of August 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Hasim Rahman (USA)
2. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
3. Mike Tyson (USA)
4. Evander Holyfield (USA)
5. David Tua (NZ)
6. Lamon Brewster (USA)
7. John Ruiz (USA)
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9. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
10. Oliver McCall (USA)
11. Joe Mesi (USA)
12. Fres Oquendo (USA)
13. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
14. Jameel McCline (USA)
15. Faruq Saleem (USA)
16. Danny Williams (GB)
17. Dominick Guinn (USA)
18. Henry Akinwande (NIG)
19. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)
20. Jeremy Williams (USA)
21. Lou Savarese (USA)
22. Lance Whitaker (USA)
23. Larry Donald (USA)
24. Saul Montana (MEX)
25. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
26. Clifford Etienne (USA)
27. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
28. Cedric Boswell (USA)
29. Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)
30. Samuel Peter (NIG)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. Louis Azille (DR)
4. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
5. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
6. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
7. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
8. Rudiger May (GER)
9. Sebastiaan Rothman (SA)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Pavel Melkomian (RUS)
12. Rydell Booker (USA)
13. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
14. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
15. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
16. Ezra Sellers (USA)
17. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
18. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
19. Ravea Springs (USA)
20. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
21. Turan Bagci (TUR)
22. Alain Simon (FRA)
23. Michael Simms (USA)
24. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
25. Mark Hobson (GB)
26. Felix Cora (USA)
27. Kelvin Davis (USA)
28. Jorge Kahwagi (MEX)
29. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
30. Valery Brudov (RUS)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)
1. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
2. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
3. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
4. Stipe Drews (CRO)
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21. Zsolt Erdei (HUN)
22. Silvio Branco (ITA)
23. Hugo Garay (ARG)
24. Orlando Rivera (PR)
25. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
26. Elvis Michailenko (LAT)
27. Madjid Zaim (FRA)
28. Rodney Toney (USA)
29. Ron Simms (USA)
30. Jackson Chanet (FRA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)
1. Eric Lucas (CAN)
2. Danilo Haussler (GER)
3. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
6. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
7. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
8. Charles Brewer (USA)
9. Jeff Lacy (USA)
10. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
11. Henry Porras (CR)
12. Brian Magee (GB)
13. Scott Pemberton (USA)
14. Andre Thysse (SA)
15. Robin Reid (GB)
16. Kabary Salem (EGY)
17. Oscar Bravo (USA)
18. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
19. Glenn Catley (GB)
20. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
21. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
22. Carmine Tufano (USA)
23. Mario Veit (GER)
24. Omar Sheika (USA)
25. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
26. Willie Stewart (USA)
27. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
28. Victor Oganov (RUS)
29. Charles Adamu (GHA)
30. James Lubwana (UGA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
5. Wayne Alexander (GB)
6. Eric Mitchell (USA)
7. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
8. Evans Ashira (KEN)
9. Jermain Taylor (USA)
10. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
11. Raymond Joval (HOL)
12. Epifanio Mendoza (COL)
13. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
14. Quentin Smith (USA)
15. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
16. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
17. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
18. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
19. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
20. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
21. Bert Schenk (GER)
22. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
23. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
24. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
25. Yoshinori Araki (JAP)
26. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
27. Yuri Tsarenko (BELA)
28. Jesse Brinkley (USA)
29. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
30. Anthony Bonsante (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)
1. Fernando Vargas (USA)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Kassim Ouma (USA)
5. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
6. Alex Bunema (USA)
7. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
8. J.C. Candelo (COL)
9. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
10. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
11. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
12. Raul Marquez (USA)
13. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
14. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
15. Toshiharu Kaneyama (JAP)
16. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
17. Michael Rask (DEN)
18. Julio Garcia (CUB)
19. Rodney Jones (USA)
20. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
21. Angel Hernandez (MEX)
22. Travis Simms (USA)
23. Richard Williams (GB)
24. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)
25. Shawn Garnett (USA)
26. Jamie Moore (GB)
27. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
28. Michael Lerma (USA)
29. Akhmed Oligov (RUS)
30. Tshepo Mashego (SA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Vernon Forrest (USA)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
5. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
6. Michel Trabant (GER)
7. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Teddy Reid (USA)
10. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)
11. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
12. Christian Bladt (DEN)
13. Paolo Roberto (SWE)
14. Ishe Smith (USA)
15. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
16. Michele Orlando (ITA)
17. Frederic Klose (FRA)
18. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
19. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
20. Ernesto Carmona (MEX)
21. Neil Sinclair (GB)
22. Joel Julio (COL)
23. James Hare (GB)
24. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
25. Chris Smith (USA)
26. Kermit Cintron (USA)
27. Eduardo Bejarano (ARG)
28. Christopher Henry (BAR)
29. Freddy Hernandez (MEX)
30. Anthony Thompson (USA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
6. Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
8. James Leija (USA)
9. Jason Cook (GB)
10. Omar Weis (ARG)
11. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
12. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
13. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
14. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
15. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
16. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
17. Carlos Maussa (COL)
18. Eamonn Magee (GB)

19. Junior Witter (GB)
20. Alex Trujillo (PR)
21. Ricardo Williams (USA)
22. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
23. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
24. Victor Kpadenou (GHA)
25. Jose Areli Lopez (MEX)
26. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
27. Alvaro Aguilar (MEX)
28. Carlos Mairena (NIC)
29. Samuel Malinga (SA)
30. Eduardo Gomez (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)

1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
6. Juan Diaz (MEX)
7. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
8. Julio Diaz (USA)
9. Aldo Rios (ARG)
10. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
11. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
12. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
13. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
14. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
15. Courtney Burton (USA)
16. David Burke (GB)
17. Michael Clark (USA)
18. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
19. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
20. Lamar Murphy (USA)
21. Graham Earl (GB)
22. Billy Irwin (CAN)
23. Steve Quinonez (USA)
24. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
25. Ameth Diaz (PAN)
26. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
27. Mat Zegan (POL)
28. Steve Forbes (USA)
29. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
30. Juliano Ramos (ARG)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Jesus Chavez (USA)

1. Randy Suico (PHIL)
2. Mzonke Fana (SA)
3. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
4. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
5. Affif Djelti (FRA)
6. Diego Corrales (USA)
7. Zahir Raheem (USA)
8. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
9. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
10. Mike Anchondo (USA)
11. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
12. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
13. Nate Campbell (USA)
14. Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
15. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
16. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
17. Daniel Attah (NIG)
18. Orlando Salido (MEX)
19. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
20. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
21. Alex Arthur (GB)
22. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
23. Manuel Bocanegra (MEX)
24. Steve Luevano (USA)
25. Tiger Martinez (USA)
26. Cesar Soriano (MEX)
27. Craig Docherty (GB)
28. Yongsoo Choi (KOR)
29. Daniel Dominguez (MEX)
30. Oscar Tinajero (MEX)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)

1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
4. William Abelyan (USA)
5. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
6. Luis Fuente (MEX)
7. Rocky Juarez (USA)
8. Spend Abazi (DEN)
9. Guty Espadas (MEX)
10. Osamu Sato (JAP)
11. Humberto Soto (MEX)
12. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
13. Takalani Ndlovu (SA)
14. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
15. Whyber Garcia (PAN)
16. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
17. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
18. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
19. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
20. Nicky Cook (GB)
21. Vuyani Bungu (SA)
22. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
23. Angel Chacon (PR)
24. George Priest Smalls (USA)
25. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
26. Hector Marquez (MEX)
27. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
28. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
29. David Murillo (MEX)
30. Choi Tseveenpurev (MON)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)

1. Napapol Kiattisakchocchoi (THAI)
2. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
3. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
4. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
5. Paulie Ayala (USA)
6. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
7. Willie Jorrin (USA)
8. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
9. Jose Rojas (VEN)
10. David Donis (USA)
11. Yoshikane Nakajima (JAP)
12. Jimrex Jaca (PHIL)
13. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
14. Pedrito Laurente (PHIL)
15. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
16. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
17. Art Simonyan (USA)
18. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
19. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
20. Marcos Licona (MEX)
21. Eduardo Garcia (MEX)
22. Sergio Medina (ARG)
23. Esham Pickering (GB)
24. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
25. Fernando Beltran Jr. (MEX)
26. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
27. Sammy Ventura (MEX)
28. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
29. Martin Honorio (MEX)
30. Cristobal Cruz (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)

1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Genaro Garcia (USA)
4. David Guerault (FRA)
5. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
6. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
7. Julio Zarate (MEX)
8. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
10. Noel Wilders (GB)
11. Tim Austin (USA)
12. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
13. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
14. Moises Castro (NIC)
15. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
16. Pete Frissina (USA)
17. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
18. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
19. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
20. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
21. Jess Maca (PHIL)
22. Jesus Perez (COL)
23. Vusi Malinga (SA)
24. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
25. Steve Molitor (CAN)
26. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
27. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
28. Anyetei Laryea (GHA)
29. Nicky Booth (GB)
30. Silence Mabuza (SA)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)

1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
6. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
7. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
8. Martin Castillo (MEX)
9. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
10. Peter Culshaw (GB)
11. Jose Navarro (USA)
12. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
13. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
14. Yuji Kojima (JAP)
15. Felix Machado (VEN)
16. Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)
17. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
18. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
19. Sergio Perez (MEX)
20. Jose Beranza (MEX)
21. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
22. Shin Ogata (JAP)
23. Karim Quibir (SPA)
24. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
25. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
26. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
27. Kohei Matsuura (JAP)
28. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
29. Neddy Garcia (USA)
30. Ali Rohmad (INDO)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)

1. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
4. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
5. Brian Viloria (USA)
6. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
7. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
8. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
9. Jair Jimenez (COL)
10. Damaen Kelly (GB)
11. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
12. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
13. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
14. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
15. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
16. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)
17. Koji Koyama (JAP)
18. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
19. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
20. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
21. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
22. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
23. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
24. Horacio Chicagual (ARG)
25. Julio Ler (ARG)
26. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
27. Jose Araiza (MEX)
28. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
29. Jason Booth (GB)
30. Sherwin Paro (PHIL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)

1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
3. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
4. Yosam Choi (KOR)
5. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
6. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
7. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
8. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
9. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
10. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
11. Monefisi Myekeni (SA)
12. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
13. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
14. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
15. Omar Nino (MEX)
16. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
17. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
18. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
19. Juan Centeno (NIC)
20. Steve Msimango (SA)
21. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
22. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
23. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)
24. Armand De La Cruz (PHIL)
25. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
26. Jun Kitano (JAP)
27. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
28. Angelo Dottin (PAN)
29. Edgar Sosa (MEX)
30. Bert Batawang (PHIL)

STRAWWEIGHTS

Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)

1. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
2. Eagle Akakura (JAP)
3. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
4. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
5. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
6. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
7. Khulile Makeba (SA)
8. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
9. Juan Palacios (NIC)
10. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
11. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
12. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
13. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
14. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
15. Ulises Solis (MEX)
16. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
17. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
18. Eduardo Marquez (NIC)
19. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
20. Omar Soto (MEX)
21. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
22. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
23. Francisco Rosas (MEX)
24. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
25. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
26. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
27. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
28. Iwan Key (INDO)
29. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
30. Emilio Aguelican (MEX)

IBF RATINGS

(Ratings as of August 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Fres Oquendo (USA)
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. John Ruiz (USA)
6. Evander Holyfield (USA)
7. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
8. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
9. Mike Tyson (USA)
10. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: James Toney (USA)

1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Ezra Sellers (USA)
4. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
5. Virgil Hill (USA)
6. Kelvin Davis (USA)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
9. Alex Petkovic (RUS)
10. Louis Azille (USA)
11. Dale Brown (CAN)
12. Kenny Keene (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
4. Clinton Woods (GB)
5. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
6. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
7. Montell Griffin (USA)
8. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
9. Stipe Drews (CRO)
10. Richard Hall (USA)
11. George Jones (USA)
12. Eric Harding (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)

1. Vacant
2. Danilo Haussler (GER)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Charles Brewer (USA)
5. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
6. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
7. Jeff Lacy (USA)
8. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
9. Mario Veit (GER)
10. Byron Mitchell (USA)
11. Antwun Echols (USA)
12. Danny Green (AUSTRL)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Howard Eastman (GB)
4. Bert Schenk (GER)
5. Raymond Joval (HOL)
6. Evans Ashira (GUY)
7. Jermain Taylor (USA)
8. Bea Diallo (LIB)
9. Derrell Coley (USA)
10. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
11. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
12. Aaron Mitchell (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Winky Wright (USA)

1. Kassim Ouma (USA)
2. J.C. Candelo (USA)
3. Verno Phillips (USA)
4. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
5. Emmett Linton (USA)
6. Shane Mosley (USA)
7. Angel Hernandez (USA)
8. Fernando Vargas (USA)
9. Julio Garcia (USA)
10. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
11. Travis Simms (USA)
12. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. James Hare (ENG)
5. Jose Celaya (USA)
6. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
7. Michele Trabant (GER)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Christian Bladt (DEN)
10. Vernon Forrest (USA)
11. Kermit Cintron (USA)
12. Teddy Reid (USA)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)

1. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
4. Omar Weis (ARG)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Mike Stewart (USA)
7. Paul Spadafora (USA)
8. Miguel Cotto (USA)
9. James Leija (USA)
10. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
11. Lovemore Ndou (AUSTRL)
12. Carlos Vilches (ARG)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Vacant

1. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
2. Levander Johnson (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
5. Julio Diaz (USA)
6. Courtney Burton (USA)
7. Juan Lazcano (USA)
8. Steve Johnston (USA)
9. Angel Manfredy (USA)
10. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
11. Michael Clark (USA)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)

1. Steve Forbes
2. Vacant
3. Joel Casamayor (USA)
4. Diego Corrales (USA)
5. David Santos (USA)
6. Phillip Ndou (SA)
7. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
8. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (THAI)
9. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
10. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
11. Alex Arthur (ENG)
12. Nate Campbell (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. William Abelyan (USA)
5. Michael Brodie (ENG)
6. Orlando Salido (MEX)
7. In Jin Chi (KOR)
8. Zahir Raheem (USA)
9. Rocky Juarez (USA)
10. Oscar Leon (PR)
11. Victor Polo (COL)
12. Guty Espadas (MEX)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. David Donis (USA)
6. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
7. F. Rakkiatgym (THAI)
8. Fernando Velardez (USA)
9. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
10. Art Simonyan (USA)
11. Diego Morales (MEX)
12. Walter Estrada (COL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)

1. Pete Frissina (USA)
2. Tim Austin (USA)
3. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
4. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
5. David Guerault (FRA)
6. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
7. Jesus Perez (COL)
8. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
9. Noel Wilders (GB)
10. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
11. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)
12. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Felix Machado (VEN)
4. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Martin Castillo (MEX)
7. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
8. Angel Priolo (COL)
9. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
10. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
11. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
12. Adonis Rivas (NIC)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
4. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
5. Damaen Kelly (GB)
6. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
7. Jair Jimenez (COL)
8. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
9. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
10. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
11. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
12. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
5. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
6. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
7. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
8. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
9. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
10. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Edgar Cardenas (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
5. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
6. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
7. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
8. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
9. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
10. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
11. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
12. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, November 1941

SLUGGING

Line Of Demarcation Between Clever Boxers And Punchers Always More In Evidence As Regards Middleweight Class Than For Any Other Division—Same Situation Exists Today As It Did In The Past

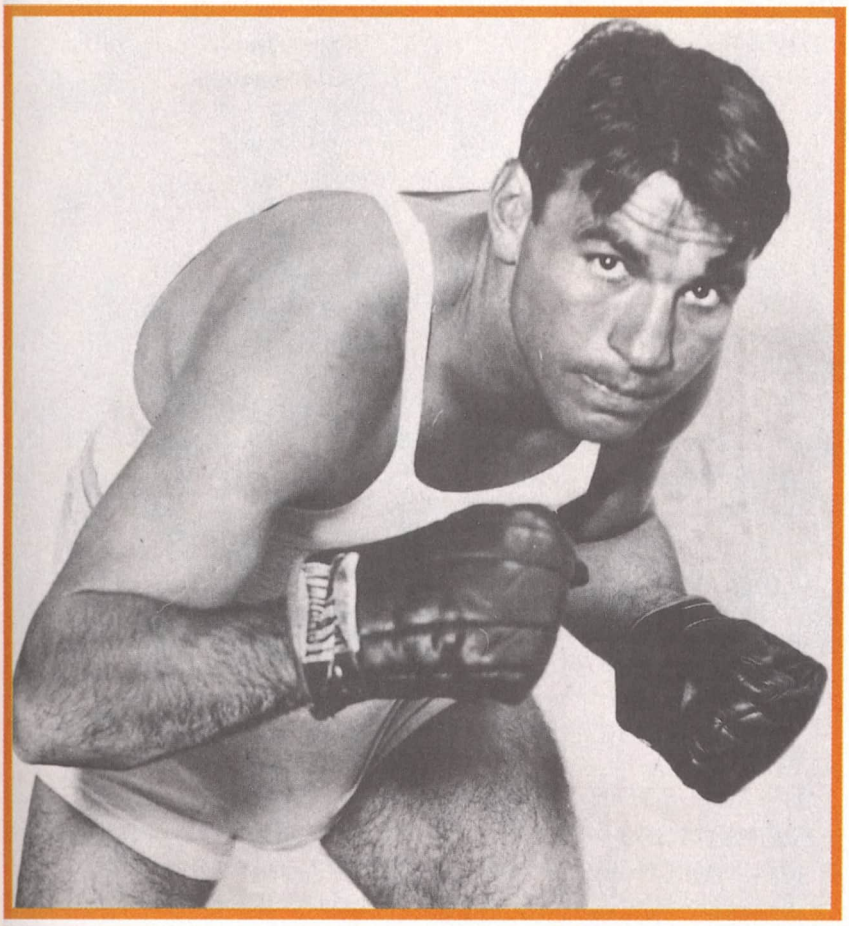
By Harvey Bright

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

For versatility of fighting styles, as represented by the men who deal out devastating kayo wallops, and those who box circles around opponents, you have to hand it to the middleweight class, which has ever been prolific in the production of sharply contrasting scrapping types.

No other boxing grade can boast of such a variety of performers flashing such widely different milling tactics. Whenever an exceptionally clever middleweight has forged to the front, a slugger of equal poundage has bobbed up to try conclusions with him. Sometimes the skillful lad out-generals and outpoints his adversary; some-

vs. SKILL



Clever tactician Billy Soose (left) outpointed Ken Overlin (above) to take the middleweight title at Madison Square Garden in 1941, but it was a tepid encounter due to the safety-first style of both men.

times the heavy puncher bangs home a sockdologer that spells victory. In either case, a winner of satisfactory championship caliber is usually developed.

A ring collision between potential sluggers, in which one or the other is pretty sure to take the full count, also possesses unfailing lure for the fight fans. For there you have developed to the 'steenth degree the element of uncertainty that keeps a crowd jittering on the keen edge of anticipation. They're never so enthusiastic over a bout where two scientific gents, minus punching power, come together, and nothing spectacular seems likely to happen.

That's why the 15-round battle at Madison Square Garden last May, which was won on points by Billy Soose from Ken Overlin, didn't please the onlookers. It was a rather tedious show in which Soose grabbed the middleweight title, as okayed by the New York Boxing Commission, but neither man's reputation as a fighter was in any way improved. Overlin went through his paces like a chap who knows he is washed-up, and mustn't take chances. Soose boxed cautiously, as though afraid Overlin might have something up his sleeve that needed careful watching. The net result was a sparring exhibition utterly devoid of thrills.

It was an unfortunate bit of matchmaking that, due to the elimination process necessary to the making of champs, couldn't be helped.

Now this same pair is matched for a return championship bout in the Garden, despite the fact that the much better arrangement would have been to pair Soose with his three-time over-the-weight conqueror, Georgie Abrams, since a Soose-Tony Zale match cannot be made because of the managerial obstacles. What the public would like to see most, of course, is a Soose-Zale mill because Tony, with Al Hostak, rates the hardest hitter in the division. Billy beat Zale in a peach of a scrap in Chicago, and a repeat would be the biggest drawing card of any middleweight match.

The spectators of the Soose-Zale encounter at Chi got a great kick out of it because they knew Billy was flirting with disaster every time he got within range of a Zale wallop, and might be clouted senseless any second. It didn't work out that way, but the air was tense with expectancy from start to finish.

The three battles in which Zale and Al Hostak participated were real thrillers, reminding us that two punchers together can make a fantastic fight. Both fought like infuriated pit terriers, and it was touch-and-go which one would keel over first. On the first occasion, Hostak broke his right hand and was dropped several times. He always came back fighting, however, and though he lost the decision, was firmly convinced that, with a little better luck, he could whip Zale.

The second mix-up was even more sensational than the first. The pace set was murderously fast and the air full of leather-swishing thunderbolts. But Zale put one stunning right to the button in the 13th frame that did the trick, and Hostak collapsed. In their third mill, Hostak was kayoed in the second.

It's a tossup which man packs the harder punch, a question not decided by the fact that Zale scored two knockouts. If Hostak had tagged Tony on the right spot, Zale would probably have been temporarily eliminated.

Among the clever boxing middleweights of the heroic past, the name of Nonpareil Jack Dempsey, first of the Queensberry middleweight champions, shines forth in bold relief. The Nonpareil could hit hard enough to put away an opponent once he got him on the run, but never indulged in wild mixing. Whether they were sluggers or brilliant boxers, Dempsey wore them down scientifically, and put over the finishing punch when he judged the subject was ripe for operation.

He was really a welterweight, according to modern standards, yet though the middleweight limit in his day was 154 pounds,

THE RING RATINGS, November 1941

Gus Lesnevich

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joe Louis
1. Lou Nova
2. Billy Conn
3. Buddy Baer
4. Lem Franklin
5. Bob Pastor
6. Abe Simon
7. Melio Bettina
8. Turkey Thompson
9. Alberto Lovell
10. Arturo Godoy

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Gus Lesnevich
1. Booker Beckwith
2. Mose Brown
3. Jimmy Bivins
4. Tami Mauriello
5. Jimmy Webb
6. Anton Christoforidis
7. Erv Sarlen
8. Oscar Rankins
9. Teddy Yarosz
10. Joe Maxim

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Tony Zale
2. Georgie Abrams
3. Billy Soose
4. Ken Overlin
5. Steve Belloise
6. Coley Welsh
7. Shorty Hogue
8. Antonio Fernandez
9. Milt Aaron
10. Johnny Colan

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Freddie Cochrane
1. Fritzie Zivic
2. Bob Montgomery
3. Mike Kaplan
4. Izzy Jannazzo
5. Charley Burley
6. Holman Williams
7. Cocoa Kid
8. Harry Weekly
9. Young Kid McCoy
10. Wicky Harkins

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Lew Jenkins
1. Ray Robinson
2. Sammy Angott
3. Jackie Wilson
4. Davey Day
5. Dave Castilloux
6. George Latka
7. Ray Lunny
8. Harry Hurst
9. Nick Castiglione
10. Maxie Shapiro

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Chalky Wright
1. Ritchie Lemos
2. Lou Transparenti
3. Bobby Ivy
4. Joey Archibald
5. Sal Bartola
6. Harry Jeffra
7. Mike Raffa
8. Jackie Wilson
9. Jackie Callura
10. Georgie Pace

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Lou Salica
1. Tony Olivera
2. Rush Dalma
3. Kenny Lindsay
4. Kui Kong Young
5. Tommy Forte
6. Manuel Ortiz
7. Jim Brady
8. Freddy Pope
9. Horace Mann
10. Benny Goldberg

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Jackie Paterson
2. Little Dado
3. Little Pancho
4. Johnny Shaughnessy
5. Warren Kendall
6. Jimmy Stubbs
7. Luis Castillo
8. Jimmy Stewart
9. Small Montana
10. Lorenzo Safora

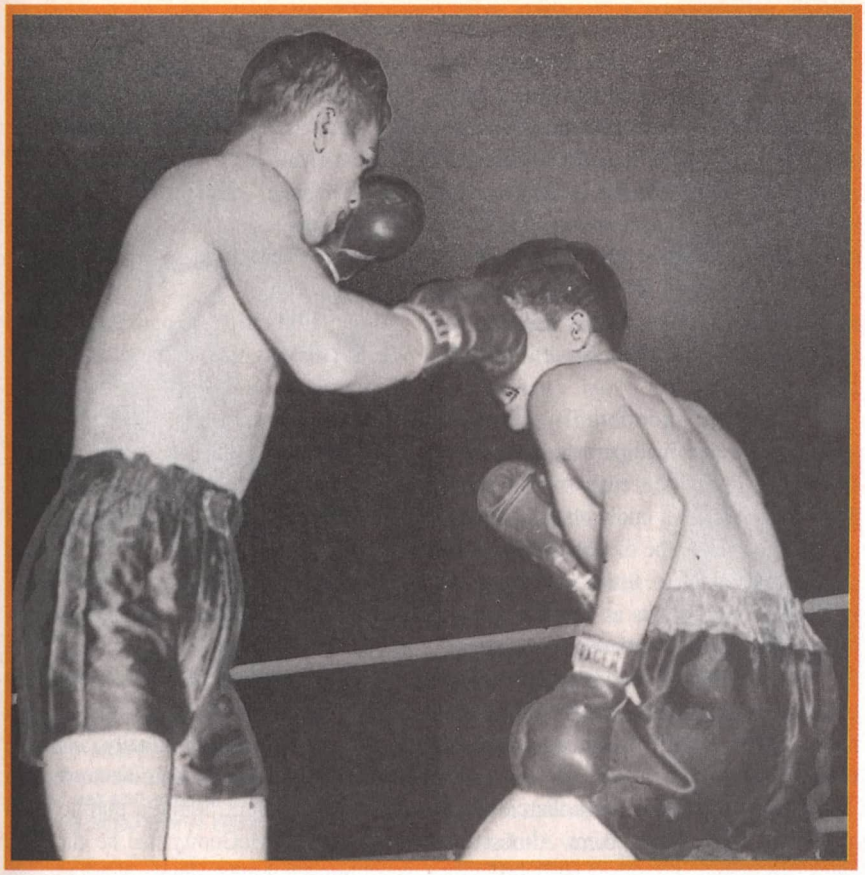
he battled the bigger men successfully for five years, only meeting with one reverse, when George La Blanche, "The Marine," knocked him out in 32 rounds with the pivot blow, which was afterward declared a foul and barred from use in the ring by all American fight clubs.

La Blanche could never face Dempsey again in the ring, and Jack continued to occupy the middleweight throne until the fateful day when he succumbed to the superior physical advantages of lanky Bob Fitzsimmons.

Fitz was a heavyweight from the waist up, and after he won from Dempsey, he never again scaled at the 154 mark for battle. There were no boxing commissions then to regulate the fighting weights. Champions did pretty much as they pleased in the scaling business. That's why you read of so many old-time battles waged on a "give-or-take a few pounds" basis. So when Fitz announced that hereafter he would insist on 158 pounds for the division he headed, there was none to say nay!

From January 14, 1891, when he defeated Dempsey, canny Bob took on middleweights and heavyweights indiscriminately, and up to September 26, 1894, he made no actual defense of his title. Then he fought Dan Creedon of Australia in New Orleans. Creedon was a good boxer, short, chunky, and equipped with a capable kayo punch. However, he was no match for Fitz, who put him away in the second frame, and had an easy time doing it.

That was the last time Fitzsimmons scaled at the middleweight limit, after which he campaigned among the big fel-



Soose wasn't always a boring performer, but he needed an aggressive rival to show his best stuff. Such was the case when he decisioned Tony Zale (pictured) in a pleasing 1940 scrap in Chicago.

lows, and went on to win the heavyweight crown by kayoing Jim Corbett in 1897.

Wizard-like cleverness and a killing wallop were the fistic assets of Kid McCoy, who for a while laid claim to the middleweight title, but speedily outgrew the weight, and had to seek honors in the heavy brigade. How McCoy tricked Tommy Ryan into a match for which Ryan was only half trained, because Ryan thought the astute kid intended to take a flop, is an old story. It was the only time in his long fighting career that Ryan made such a mistake, which resulted in his being kayoed in 15 rounds.

But from 1896 up to 1907, when he retired, Ryan was boss of the middleweights, at 158 pounds, and occasionally took a flyer out of his class against heavier men. In all that time he never dropped a decision, and there were plenty to conquer.

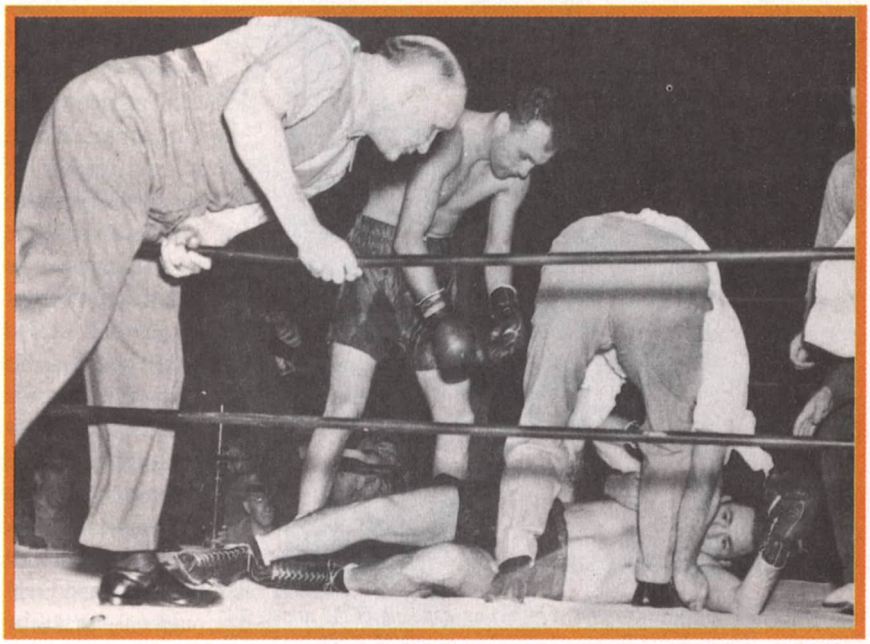
Among those he beat were such solid sockers as Tommy West, Johnny Gorman, Jack Bonner, Australian Jim Ryan, Kid Carter, Mysterious Billy Smith, Hugo Kelly, Dick O'Brien, Frank Craig, John Willie—just to mention a few out of a lengthy list of notable warriors. The middleweight class was then certainly rich in fighting talent, but if we except McCoy, who possibly rated about even with Ryan as a scientist, the latter had an edge on every man he fought in point of sheer cleverness.

The passage of the years has not infrequently created false halos around the memories of former star scrappers, but there is nothing legendary about the reputation won by Ryan as a past master performer with the gloves. His record speaks for itself.

His successor, Stanley Ketchel, gained similar renown, not as a boxer, but as one of the most deadly punchers that ever walloped a foe into unconsciousness. Here again, we see the middleweight class coming through with clever boxers to pit against the slugging champ.

Two really fine ring generals and clever artists were Jack "Twin" Sullivan and Joe Thomas, both of whom made Stanley step fast and slug his hardest to win. It took Ketchel 20 rounds to stop Sullivan. Thomas held the champion to a 20-round draw. They tried it again, and Thomas was knocked out in the 32nd round of a battle often described by Ketchel as the toughest of his career. In their third meeting, Ketchel took a 20-round decision, but in a fourth, Joe was knocked cold in the second round. The beatings Thomas received in these encounters finished him as a pugilist, and he retired after the final combat.

There were few soft touches for Ketchel during his championship reign, nor, to be fair, did he ever look for any. He took his opponents just as they came and none was of the easy-money variety. Billy Papke knocked Ketchel out in 12 rounds in Los Angeles, on September 8, 1908. Ketchel was practically blinded by a punch between the eyes in the first round and



Al Hostak was one of the more devastating punchers of the era. In 1939, Hostak won back the middleweight crown from Solly Krieger, who is pictured being helped up by Hostak and others after the kayo.

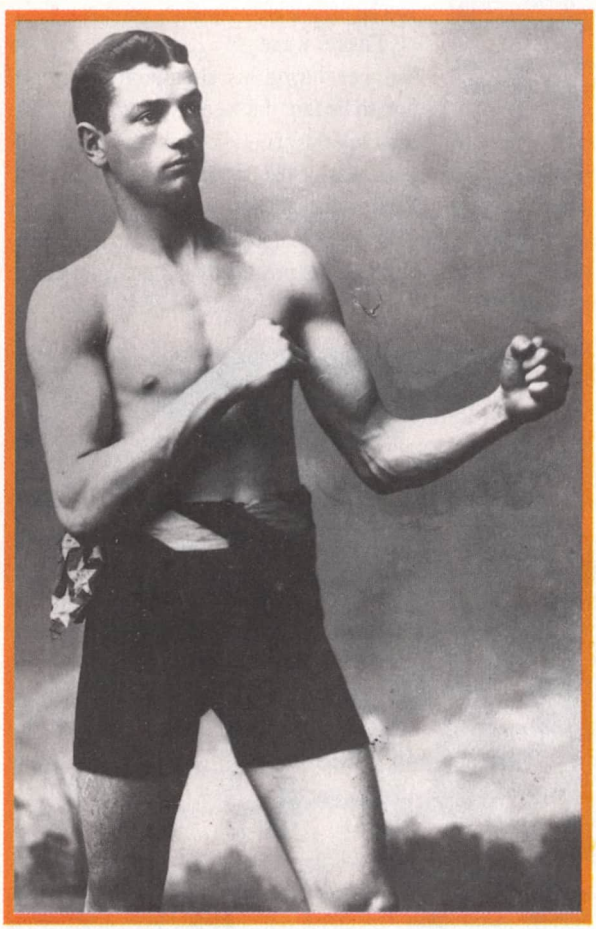
took a hard beating before being counted out.

This was a stunning surprise for the far-flung army of Ketchel admirers. But Stanley sprung a still greater sensation less than three months later, when he had revenge by knocking out Papke in 11 rounds. Ketchel became the first champion of any class to get back a title by handing a sleep potion to the man who had stopped him.

Papke succeeded to the middleweight title when Ketchel was shot and killed by Walter Dippley, a ranch hand, in Conway, Missouri, in 1910. Billy lost the crown to Frank Klaus on a foul in March 1913, and Klaus was dethroned by George Chip on October 11 of the same year. On April 7, 1914, Al McCoy, the New York southpaw, became champion by knocking out Chip in a round.

McCoy hung on to the title for more than three years and six months. During that period, he did nearly all his fighting around New York State, where the no-decision, 10-round rule was in force. He had just three fighting assets: the ability to stand up under heavy punishment, a terrific punch, and an awkward boxing style that puzzled opponents. He was often outpointed and battered around, but under the saving no-decision clause, he couldn't lose unless he was knocked out, and that didn't happen until Mike O'Dowd was lucky enough to get home on his jaw and toppled him for a full count on November 14, 1917.

McCoy was undoubtedly the most unimpressive and mediocre scrapper that ever held the leadership of the middleweight class. Yet, oddly enough, during his tiresome reign, the division was rich in genuinely good talent. It was then that such brilliant middleweights as Jimmy Clabby, Eddie McGoorty, Frank Mantell, Young Ahearn, and Mike Gibbons were in their prime and giving ring performances that made all the fight fans sit up and take notice.



For a brief time in the late-1890s, Kid McCoy was king of the middleweights, thanks to his potent combination of boxing cleverness and one-punch power. McCoy, however, quickly grew beyond the middleweight limit and gave up the title to fight larger men.

Gibbons may be listed as the cleverest among them. Almost any old-timer will tell you that Gibbons was the nearest approach to the superb artistry of Tommy Ryan that the middle grade has ever known. His chief fault lay in being over-cautious. Where Ryan would have taken a chance, Gibbons was wary.

However, it would be unfair to attribute this to lack of courage. There was a good reason for Gibbons' dislike of reckless slugging and it lay in the fact that, although he was fighting middleweights, he only scaled around 150 pounds at his best and had to give away considerable weight to his opponents. The scaling notch for the class was, as already noticed, 158, which men like McGoorty and Clabby could only make by dint of hard training.

In the early stages of Gibbons' career, Clabby won a six-round decision over him, but Mike showed such form that he surprised the winner, who was then rated as top-notch goods. They were frequent rivals for a couple of years, until Jimmy decided that Gibbons was a good man to stay away from, and sailed for Australia, where he met with considerable success.

From 1911 up to the outbreak of World War I, Gibbons was a trump card for the promoters. He boxed all over the country, and beat the best of 'em. The boxing writers named him "The St. Paul Phantom," with reference to his smooth, gliding, ghost-like movements when in action, and thoroughly appreciated the bewildering suddenness with which he so often became transformed into a deadly knockout puncher.

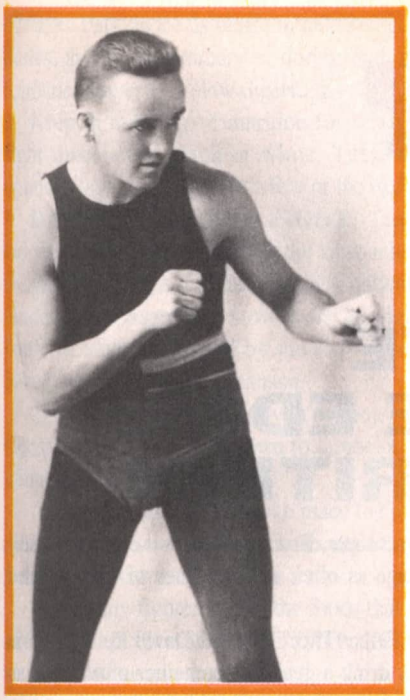
He disappointed them occasionally, as at the time when he boxed McGoorty in New York, loafed along lazily, and made no attempt to fight back in the no-decision bout. Few present doubted that he could have stopped McGoorty had he chosen to exert himself, but he simply didn't try.

The experts were bothered by these queer Gibbons moods, but it didn't lessen their high estimate of his ability, or change their opinion that he could be champion if he so desired. They had reason for their faith in him. If a man fights incessantly for eight years without having a defeat registered against him, he surely belongs among the fistic elite.

Bob McAllister came to New York from California with a reputation as one of the fastest boxers ever turned out on the Pacific slope. He was a product of the celebrated Olympic Club, from which Jim Corbett graduated, and it was predicted that Bob was a second Corbett in the making, for speed and style, and sure to become a star heavyweight as soon as he put on some extra flesh.

He was matched with Gibbons, and for several rounds displayed a disconcerting left jab and agile footwork that seemed to bear out all the good things that had been written about him. Mike was being outpointed; Mac had it on him in height and reach and knew how to utilize those advantages.

But Gibbons got his man's measure by the time the fight entered the sixth round; he jarred and jolted the tall youngster with



Middleweight contender Mike Gibbons was the antithesis of Ketchel. He was overly cautious, showing a true disdain for reckless slugging. But Gibbons was also among the elite middleweights during the period prior to World War I.

short lefts and rights, and had him hanging on at the bell. In the seventh, Gibbons cut loose, beat McAllister repeatedly to left counters, and then shot a right uppercut full on the chin. Six seconds were tolled off, and then the Californian's handlers threw in a towel in token of defeat. They might have saved themselves the trouble, for Mac was out cold!

That is one illustration of what Gibbons could accomplish when he was really out for the kill, as in the case of his knockout victory over the sensationally clever Ahearn, who got a similar dose of Gibbons' smashing leather in four rounds.

On the opposite side of the picture, there was the McGoorty affair, and Mike's battle with Packey McFarland in 1915. That wonderfully smart boxer from Chicago, who started out as a lightweight, had outgrown both that class and the welter grade, but was well under the middle limit. As regarded weight, he and Mike were evenly matched, and it was an open question who was the cleverer boxer.

The spectators were prepared for a scientific treat, and from one point, maybe, it was just that when Mike and Packey began operations in a 10-rounder. The trouble was that they were too clever, and not sufficiently aggressive to please a majority of the patrons. McFarland wouldn't take a chance and neither would his opponent. They either were afraid of each other or were trying to feel each other out.

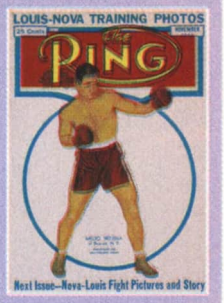
Masters of every trick in the game, they feinted, jabbed with clock-like precision, blocked beautifully, and their footwork was beyond criticism. But neither attempted to land anything resembling a dangerous wallop, and the 10 rounds wound up with no damage inflicted on either side.

It was a no-decision bout, and the newspaper boys dubbed it a pretty boxing exhibition with honors even, but the universal opinion was that, considered as a fight, it came very close to registering in the "no-contest" category. What the fans said couldn't very well be printed without risking punishment by the postal authorities.

Well, an overdose of the scientific stuff unaccompanied by the expected leavening of slugging always did disagree with the digestions of the "coves what loves a mill!" Those who paid out their good money to see Soose take Overlin's title away from him in a perfectly harmless championship gamble felt much the same way. ■

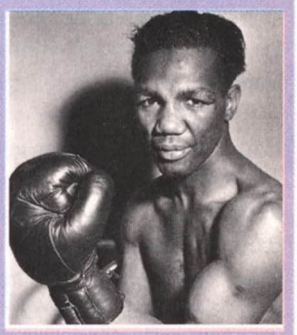
THE RING, November 1941

The Cover: Heavyweight contender Melio Bettina grabbed the cover during a tense time in the United States, with the country on the verge of entering World War II. Bettina, who hailed from Beacon, New York, was ranked seventh in the heavyweight division at the time.



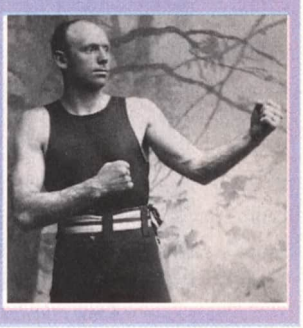
Joltin' Joe Joins The Army: With the nation about to go to war, America received its biggest boost from heavyweight champion Joe Louis, who was drafted into the U.S. Army. His induction into the armed services was thought to be a big morale lift for the country.

Chalky Chalks One Up: Before Chalky Wright ever won the featherweight title, boxing experts had called him "The Uncrowned Champion." Wright made it official with an impressive 11th-round knockout of Joey Archibald in Washington, D.C. It took Wright 13 years to finally get a title shot.



King Red: By winning the welterweight title in 1941, Freddie "Red" Cochrane was the surprise of the year. Cochrane had shown flashes of brilliance throughout parts his career, but put it all together with a 15-round decision over Fritzie Zivic on July 29, 1941, to capture the crown.

A Hairy Proposition: Fighters liked to look good no matter what era they fought in, but throughout boxing history, long hair was believed to cause problems with a fighter's vision. THE RING pointed out that legendary three-division champion Bob Fitzsimmons (pictured) never had that problem.



THE FIGHT DOCTOR

THE ULTIMATE COMPETITIVE EDGE: PROPER NUTRITION

By Margaret Goodman, MD

Nutritional choices by athletes remain a controversial topic. Boxing requires a constant obsession with weight and diet. The approaches change as often as the names of the so-called camp nutritionists.

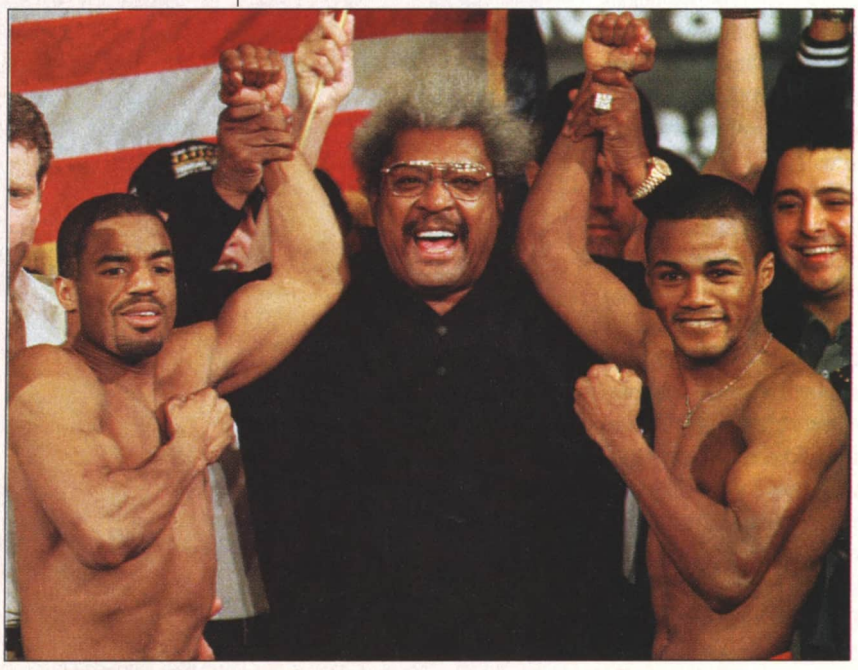
My fascination with fighter nutrition dates back to the Felix "Tito" Trinidad-David Reid weigh-in on March 2, 2000. Stepping off the scale, fighters usually drink a generous container of water or an electrolyte solution such as Gatorade or Pedialyte. On this particular day, Trinidad, who was sipping water, and his camp went into temporary seclusion. Seated alone at a large table, Trinidad received a white container. Mystified, I did my best to peer between the chanting Team Trinidad human chain. Trinidad held up poached chicken gizzards and devoured them one by one, and then drank the yellowish liquid. Backing up from this somewhat unappetizing scene, I glanced in disbelief toward Papa Trinidad. He smiled in anticipation of my question and said, "Fierro (iron)!" I replied, "Sopa de pollo (chicken soup)? We have that where I come from, too."

Although the above scenario is not typical, it begs the questions: What kind of nourishment should a fighter have 24 hours before a fight? Does it make a difference in the fight outcome?

BASIC NUTRITION: Our bodies require three basic food components: water, energy, and nutrients.

•Water not only allows us to maintain structural and biochemical integrity, but it also prevents overheating through sweating. Heat exhaustion can be lethal.

•Energy intake from food is required for metabolism and growth and to support physical activity. A moderately active 155-pound male burns about 2,700 calories per day, while a 128-pound female burns about 2,500 calories per day. Carbohydrates and fats are the body's energy sources.



A few minutes after this photo was taken, Trinidad was eating chicken gizzards

•Nutrients is a general term including vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and fiber to name a few.

Proteins are necessary for muscle development, but are not a good source of energy. Carbohydrates come in the form of simple sugars (fructose, glucose, sucrose, and lactose) or complex carbohydrates (starches, breads, pasta). Simple sugars break down easily and help satisfy energy and brain demands, especially in training. Complex carbohydrates require more time for breakdown, and are therefore more suited for en-

durance. Fats, twice as dense in calories as carbohydrates, are not recommended during high peak performance because of slow digestion.

Keep in mind, good nutrition for a boxer before fight time is not black or white. There are many opinions, so let's hear from a few of the experts.

DAY BEFORE THE FIGHT: Trainer Joe Goossen believes in priming the stomach after the weigh-in. Goossen will have junior lightweight contender Joel Casamayor slowly sip an eight-ounce bottle of water, followed by juices (but not orange juice) and soft fruit like a banana.

"Your stomach shrinks as you dry out," explained Goossen. "Joel won't sit down to a meal until 60-90 minutes later."

As most weigh-ins now take place the day before the fight, Goossen believes you do not have to be as judicious in post-weigh-in diet.

"I want my fighters to eat the foods that got them to this point in their life," he said. "For Joel, it would be Cuban food such as platanos, rice, and beans."

Goossen is in favor of small frequent meals that day. The last meal, around 9 p.m., might be chicken breast, salad, or soup, followed by a bedtime snack.

New York boxing conditioning guru Dave "Scooter" Honig recommends his fighters drink Pedialyte or Revenge by Champion Nutrition after weighing in, especially if their system has been depleted. Both drinks include branched chain amino acids that fuel muscle and help recover energy.

"The fighter's first meal could be a medium-sized steak," said Honig. "In addition to protein and fat, meat contains creatine. All are designed to provide energy. You should stay with low glycemic carbohydrates such as sweet potatoes or brown rice, which will maintain your blood sugar."

John Arthur, who works with IBF cruiserweight titleholder James Toney, believes in a simple, natural approach. He keeps Toney away from any cheeses a few days before a bout, as he believes they are hard to digest.

"No garlic, as it can thin the blood," said Arthur. "A basic multivitamin, Vitamin E, and wheat germ are okay, but often supplements can just add weight. Natural foods prevent fatigue and give a fighter natural strength."

DAY OF THE FIGHT: Dr. Flip Homansky, former Nevada State Athletic Commission chief ringside physician for more than 20 years and current commissioner, believes whatever dietary changes a fighter makes should be done far in advance so as not to upset his system.

"On the day of the fight, the fighter doesn't need protein, as the stored glycogen and muscles are already there," said Homansky. "He needs a steady source of calories. Pancakes (without syrup) are an easily digested meal providing a steady source of energy. Hydrate the entire day of the fight with either water or energy drinks."

Honig recommends oatmeal, egg whites, and chicken breasts.

"Your purpose in eating the day of the fight is to absorb nutrients," he said. "No caffeine, as it is a diuretic!"

LAST SUPPER: Who could ever forget the startling imagery of Diego Corrales devouring a sandwich on HBO only minutes before his major loss to Floyd Mayweather? What was wrong with that picture?

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Even Holyfield occasionally strays from his training diet

"Larry Holmes would structure his lifestyle around fight time," according to Dr. Homansky. "If Larry was scheduled to fight at 9 p.m., he would eat dinner at 5 p.m. each night leading up to the contest. He knew in order for his body to be at its peak, he had to chronologically redirect his internal body clock to be at the optimum performance level."

This philosophy is clearly evident in the success of former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield. In addition to his work with conditioning expert Tim Hallmark, Holyfield consulted with *Zone* nutrition author Dr. Barry Sears in 1999 to explore new sports nutrition approaches. According to Jim Thomas, Holyfield's attorney and adviser, Holyfield will also work backward.

"If the fight is at 8 p.m., Evander will eat his last meal, consisting of a good balance of lean protein, vegetables, and plenty of water, at 5 p.m.," said Thomas. "The rest of the meals are timed around the last meal in an effort to eat at least every four hours. None of the meals are large, and they are intended to keep the blood sugar level steady so as to prevent a sudden excretion of insulin, which would start the yo-yo effect. About an hour before Evander goes into the ring, he has half of a Zone bar, a fish oil capsule, and lots of water."

AFTER THE FIGHT: After a bout, whether it was a four-rounder or a 12-rounder, it is crucial to allow the boxer's body to cool down and return to his resting pulse before eating. Dr. Homansky reminds us, "Fluids cannot be neglected. You have only begun to restore your fluid balance when your urine is no longer concentrated yellow, but clear."

Everyone agrees a fighter is more than entitled to his favorite meal following a fight. It would be no surprise if late on October 4, both James Toney and Evander Holyfield searched out the biggest, juiciest steaks Las Vegas has to offer.

Next column: Diet and supplements during training. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions from readers about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send your inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19304

THE A, B, C & DEAS OF BOXING

By Tommy Deas

THE DOUBLE HOOK

You've watched the world's best fighters and read about them in this magazine, and now you want to give boxing a try, or at least learn a little more about the mechanics of the sport. Welcome to THE RING'S bi-monthly instructional feature on boxing's basics. Bear in mind, the techniques described here are just one of many approaches to the Sweet Science. The most important thing is to find a good coach and follow his instructions. All instructions on these pages are geared for an orthodox, or right-handed, stance. If you are left-handed, merely turn everything around.

Combination punching isn't just for guys who fight on the outside, at arm's reach from their opponents. This installment will teach you how to throw a combination that is an effective tool for in-fighters, the double hook.

The double hook is designed to give you an opportunity to do damage to both your opponent's body and his head, and is a handy combination to know when you find yourself going toe-to-toe with your opponent.

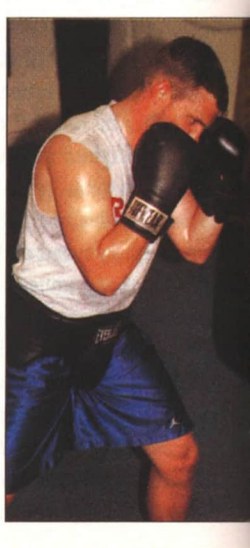
The double hook is essentially two left hooks in succession, the first to the body and the second to the head. The first punch serves two purposes: to inflict harm on your opponent's body and to set up the second punch. Whether the first hook lands cleanly or not, it should force your opponent to drop his right hand enough to give you a clear path to land the second punch.

If the first hook lands to the body, your opponent will probably drop his right elbow to cover the spot so he doesn't have to take another. If he drops the elbow to block the punch before it lands, it should still leave him open for the second shot.

The first element to throwing the double hook is establishing the proper distance from your opponent. While this combination can be thrown from long range, it leaves the puncher vulnerable to right-hand counters and gives the other fighter a clear view of what is coming, making it much more difficult to land. To get in position to throw the double hook, you want to narrow the distance on your opponent and get close. Take bigger steps as you move in behind your left jab, or bob and weave as you work your way inside. This minimizes the damage you are likely to take when moving inside.

The best position for throwing this combination is about elbow-length away from your opponent, with your opponent at the distance where you could touch his chest with your elbow if you extended it toward him. The double hook can be thrown when you are literally in physical contact with your opponent, nose-to-nose or shoulder-to-his-chest, but getting too close can smother the combination and make it hard to land cleanly.

Once you have worked your way into proper range, you need to get your body into position to punch. When fighting at close range, you want to alter your basic stance a little by bending your knees to lower your body a few inches.



Keep your left foot in front and your left shoulder angled toward your opponent over your left knee, with your right foot under your rear end and your right shoulder above it. Take care not to let your left shoulder fall back so that you end up squared up with your opponent, because it is harder to punch effectively and leaves you more vulnerable to his punches. As always, keep your chin tucked safely behind your left shoulder for protection.

From this position, take a small step forward with your left foot, ending up with your knees bent, and shift your weight over your left foot so you can feel your body weight being supported by your left knee. Begin the combination by throwing a left hook to the body. Tilt your left shoulder down slightly and rotate your right shoulder forward at the same time. Once your left shoulder is under your left ear, begin to throw the punch.

Begin the punching motion not with your hand, but with your body. Snap your right shoulder back, which will rotate the left shoulder forward. As the left shoulder begins to move forward, move your left fist out away from your body until it is at roughly a 90-degree angle from your shoulder, so your arm looks like the letter L. As the punch moves toward the target, move your left elbow forward with the motion a few inches to give you more range for the punch. Keep your fist positioned so that your left thumb stays facing toward the sky. Swing your shoulders all the way through until you feel your left fist thud into your opponent's body.

The left hook to the body can be effective no matter where on the torso it lands, but it is most effective if you can place it behind your opponent's right elbow, just below the ribs. This gives you a chance to hit soft tissue, which isn't as well protected by bone or muscle.

The second part of the combination is a left hook to the head. From the point where your left fist makes solid contact with your opponent's body, snap your left shoulder back and bring the punch back along the same arc it took going toward the target. Once you have rotated the punch about halfway back to where it started, tilt your shoulders until they are level, bringing the left shoulder up, and push off your left foot slightly so that you lessen the bend in your knee and raise that side of your body a couple of inches.

As you begin to tilt your shoulders and push off your left foot, snap your left hip and shoulder forward and raise the angle of your left arm up toward your opponent's head. Move your left elbow up a few inches, away from your body, as the punch travels forward. Bring your hips and shoulders through until somebody standing on your left side can see your back, carrying your left fist all the way through the target so it receives the full impact of your body weight.

Once you have reached this position, snap your left shoulder back and bring your left hand back until you are back in your normal stance, shifting your weight off your left foot and knee so your weight is balanced between your feet. If you want to remain inside, you should move your head or take a small step to the left or right so you aren't standing there waiting for your opponent's response. If you want to move back outside, slide off to the left or right, not straight back, until you are at a comfortable distance.

Take care to avoid some common mistakes when throwing the double hook. First of all, do not drop your right hand while you throw your hooks. This, obviously, leaves you wide open if your opponent decides to throw a hook. Also, make sure you do not lift your chin while you hook. Many beginners like to lift their chins to get a better look while they punch, especially when throwing the left hook. Keep your chin tucked tight behind your left shoulder and keep your eyes on your opponent so you are able to react if he throws a counter.

A less dangerous mistake is throwing arm punches when you use the left hook. This doesn't leave you so vulnerable to counters, but it does lessen the impact of your punches and makes the hook less effective. Remember to start the punches with your body, letting your hips and shoulders lead the way so they carry the arm along with them. You will find that you don't actually have to move your arm that much to throw a proper hook. It's just a matter of moving your elbow a few inches and adjusting the angle of your arm so that your fist extends away from your shoulder until your arm is at roughly a 90-degree angle.

Practice the double hook the same way you do other techniques, starting out working in front of a mirror and shadowboxing the move in slow motion until you begin to understand the mechanics of the combination. As you get more comfortable, pick up the pace until you are working at full speed.

After spending some time working on this combination in shadowboxing, take it over to the heavybag. The heavybag is a perfect instrument for practicing this particular combination because it's curvature somewhat resembles the human torso. Again, start out slowly and spend a few rounds working the punches in slow motion. This will give you a feel for how to throw the hooks, as well as an idea of how to maximize their impact. Again, steadily increase your work rate until you are ripping the combination at full speed.

Once you feel like you have the combination down, it's time to take it into the sparring ring and work it on a live opponent. It will probably take some time to learn how to get into range to throw the double hook against a live opponent, since he may not want to cooperate. That's what practice is for, so be patient and keep working at it until you reach a point where you can set up the double hook whenever you are ready to throw it. ■

Tommy Deas is a sportswriter for the Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News and a trainer of professional and amateur boxers.

U.S. Navy petty officer Keith Thompson, an amateur light heavyweight, demonstrates the correct technique of throwing the double left hook. Note that he keeps his right hand high and his chin tucked behind his left shoulder while throwing the combination.

PHOTOS BY SPARROW ESTES

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

LENNOX LOVERS

I wish Lennox Lewis would go out on top, as I know he can. Before retiring, he should first kayo both the Klitschko brothers, dismiss Roy Jones from the heavyweight division, and destroy Chris Byrd. This would take only one year.

EUGENE GILPIN
ironhorsegilpin@yahoo.com

Despite his close call against Vitali Klitschko and much criticism in the media, Lennox Lewis still has fans. Eugene Gilpin writes to encourage Lewis to clean out the heavyweight division before retiring, while Valerie Nelson asks how anybody could think Klitschko could beat an in-shape Lewis, when he couldn't beat a poorly conditioned version.

I'm responding to Brian Doogan's article in the November 2003 issue of THE RING EXTRA ("Lennox Lewis' Dilemma: He Should Not Fight On, But He Has To"). How insulting to a great warrior who has shown more skill, strength, class, and mentality than any world champion could. And this is how you respect him?

The Lewis-Vitali Klitschko fight may have exhibited a heavier and slower Lewis, but let's not forget who was victorious. Vitali's brother, Wladimir, said that Lewis was never in control of the fight, and was tired and overweight. Well, let me ask this: Why couldn't the younger, well-conditioned, stronger Vitali knock Lewis out?

VALERIE NELSON
Smyrna, NY

MAYWEATHER'S MAGIC

There is a reason why top Hispanic fighters such as Oscar De La Hoya, Erik Morales, and Panchito Bojado swear by trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. I mean no disrespect to any Latino fighter, but the style that Mayweather teaches is not the typical, balls-to-the-wall Mexican style that makes for great theater. Rather, they're fighting with soundness of mind.

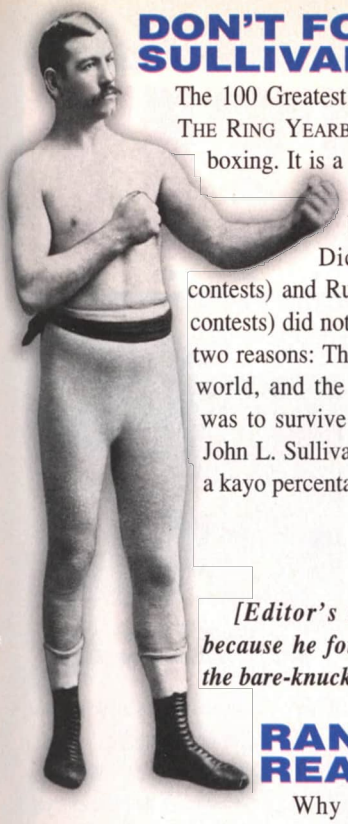
I just finished watching Bojado in his latest match, and he looked like a smooth, confident boxer, with more in his arsenal than a big punch. I believe if he stays with Mayweather he can only get better.

JOHNATHAN L. IVERSON
New York, NY

BERNSTEIN'S BACK

Having not subscribed to Showtime for a while now, I had to watch the Acelino Freitas-Jorge Barrios fight at my friend's house. Not only was the entire card exciting, I heard one of my all-time favorite boxing personalities broadcasting again—Al Bernstein. You'll seldom hear a more knowledgeable or classier guy. I think Showtime is definitely moving in the right direction—and my subscription has been renewed.

JOSH CRAIG
Spokane, WA



DON'T FORGET SULLIVAN!

The 100 Greatest Punchers Of All-Time issue of THE RING YEARBOOK is in my top 10 books on boxing. It is a superb work of statistical scholarship. Great value too. But to be a critic's critic, I think that Dick Tiger (26 knockouts in 81 contests) and Rubin Carter (19 knockouts in 40 contests) did not have high kayo percentages for two reasons: They always fought the best in the world, and the primary aim of the opponents was to survive and counter. Also, I think that John L. Sullivan deserved some rating. He had a kayo percentage of 80.

BARRY READER
Surrey, England

[Editor's note: Sullivan was omitted because he fought most of his bouts during the bare-knuckle era.]

RANKING REASON

Why did THE RING promote Vitali Klitschko from number 10 to number four after a TKO loss to Lennox Lewis? Does Vitali's gutsy, surprising performance warrant that much of a jump in the rankings, even though he was stopped? Should Vitali jump over guys such as his brother Wladimir and Hasim Rahman, even though he has yet to beat someone in the top 10? Does THE RING always increase the ranking of fighters who are winning yet stopped on cuts against someone ranked higher?

TODD HODGSON
Brooklyn, NY

[Editor's note: Vitali Klitschko's advancement was based on three factors: a) He was leading Lewis 58-56 on the official cards (as well as on THE RING'S) when the fight was stopped; b) Poor recent showings by those currently rated below Vitali—Rahman has gone 0-2-1 since beating Lewis in April '01, while Wladimir Klitschko was knocked out by Corrie Sanders in his last significant bout; c) An overall reassessment of the heavyweight division in the wake of the Lewis-Klitschko fight indicates that Vitali was probably underrated prior to his bid to win the heavyweight title.]

RIPPING THE RIPPER

I always read Ivan Goldman's "Digging Deep" column and admire him. But I've got to stick up for HBO's Larry Merchant, who Goldman criticized in the September '02 issue of THE RING EXTRA for the aggressive way Larry interviewed Bernard Hopkins after the Morrade Hakkar fight. Merchant was correct when he told Hopkins what the real world thinks of him. I'm sure many of Hopkins' fans would have told Bernard the very same thing Merchant did.

RON MILLER
Honolulu, HI

SHATTERED ILLUSION

Christy Martin, through pride, ego, arrogance, and greed, took a fight she could not win. Team Martin should have foreseen her kayo loss to Laila Ali. What manner of advisers does Christy have who allowed her to take such a risk in the name of profit? They failed her as surely as she failed the fans and former supporters who believed in her.

I think the illusion of "The Coal Miner's Daughter" as a competent boxer has been shattered in this, the worst loss of her career. Martin should retire—and her team should be ashamed for putting her in so impossible a match.

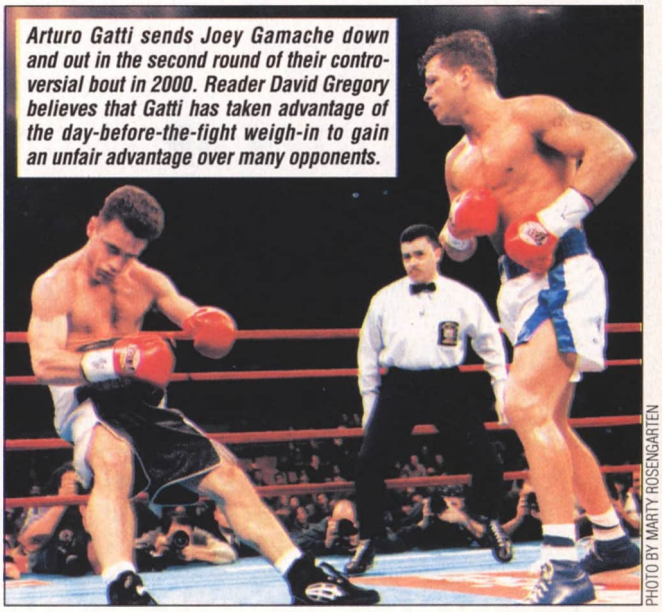
JOE HAMMELL
Waynesboro, PA

WEIGHTY ISSUE

In "Ryan Out Loud" in the November 2003 issue, Jeff Ryan presents a list of possible opponents had Arturo Gatti fought in the early-'80s: Bazooka Limon, Bobby Chacon, and Hector Camacho, among others. There is one thing Ryan forgot that invalidates his list: weigh-in practices. In the early-'80s, weigh-ins were usually the day of the fight, rather than more than 24 hours earlier, like they are now. Gatti has exploited this more than probably any other fighter today. Although you never hear about it anymore in the rush to heap adulation on him in the media, he has made a career of dehydrating himself severely before the weigh-in and then taking IV liquids before the fight to often come in two weight divisions, or close to it, above his opponent in the ring. If you saw the Joey Gamache fight, in which Gamache was brutally knocked out, you know what I mean.

Without this tactic available, Gatti would have been in not against the true 130- and 135-pounders on Ryan's list, but against, say, Aaron Pryor, Ray Leonard, Tommy Hearns, and Roberto Duran. Tell me with a straight face that he could have beaten any of *those* guys in their primes. While I enjoyed the Gatti-Micky Ward trilogy as much as any fan, and recognize the courage required to step into any boxing ring, I must say that I think it takes more courage to step into a level playing field than one with an unfair advantage. Nothing personal against Arturo, but I think the facts must be acknowledged.

DAVID GREGORY
Laurel, MD ■



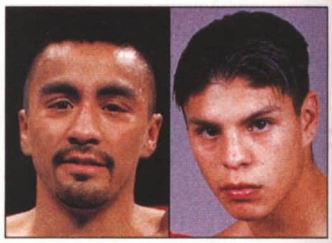
Arturo Gatti sends Joey Gamache down and out in the second round of their controversial bout in 2000. Reader David Gregory believes that Gatti has taken advantage of the day-before-the-fight weigh-in to gain an unfair advantage over many opponents.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

SHOWTIME SHOWDOWNS FOR TWO YOUNG GUNS



Juarez & Bojado: Both in tough on November 22

There comes a time in every boxing prospect's career when he must step up and face a fighter who stands a realistic chance of beating him (despite what the maneuvering of heavyweight **Faruq Saleem** might lead us to believe). For two of Main Events' top prospects, such a time arrives on November 22, at Reliant Park in Houston, Texas.

On that Showtime-televised card, Houston hero and featherweight contender **Rocky Juarez**, who became the first of the 2000 U.S. Olympians to face a former titleholder when he defeated **Hector Acero-Sanchez** last October, will face his second ex-titlist, **Willie Jorrin**, and become the first of his class to take on a boxer rated by THE RING entering the fight. And on the same show, **Francisco "Panchito" Bojado**, who has a loss on his record despite never facing an opponent perceived at the time as a threat to beat him, will get a chance to avenge that loss. And this time, we know darned well that **Juan Carlos Rubio** is a dangerous foe with a realistic chance of winning.

Bojado was the hottest prospect in the world when he squared off against Rubio in February '02, but the exciting unanimous decision loss was a momentum killer, and though Bojado has won four straight fights since, that buzz he once enjoyed is gone. If he can score an impressive victory against the man who beat him, however—ideally a spectacular knockout—the buzz might return.

But until then, the buzz belongs to Juarez. In his three years as a pro, he's shown improvement in nearly every performance, and he can't afford to let that trend reverse itself against Jorrin, who was a reigning junior featherweight beltholder until just a year ago.

"To be honest, I don't really know nothing about Jorrin," Juarez admitted. "I've never seen him fight before—or at least if I have, I don't really remember him. But I will study him a little while I'm getting ready for the fight. I don't like to look at the tapes a lot, but I'll watch probably four rounds or so of his fights, just to get an idea of what he's like."

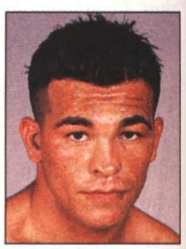
Told that Jorrin is a quick-fisted fighter who wears out the CompuBox punch-counters with his busy attack, Juarez immediately became even more welcome to the challenge.

"A fighter who comes and throws punches leaves a lot of opportunities to counterpunch, so that plays into my style well," he said. "If that's the kind of fighter he is, one thing I know is the fight will be exciting."

Speaking of exciting, rounding out the tripleheader will be lightweight **Juan Diaz**, against an opponent to be named. Based on his last few fights, all of which have been competitive and TV-friendly, it shouldn't matter much who that opponent is.

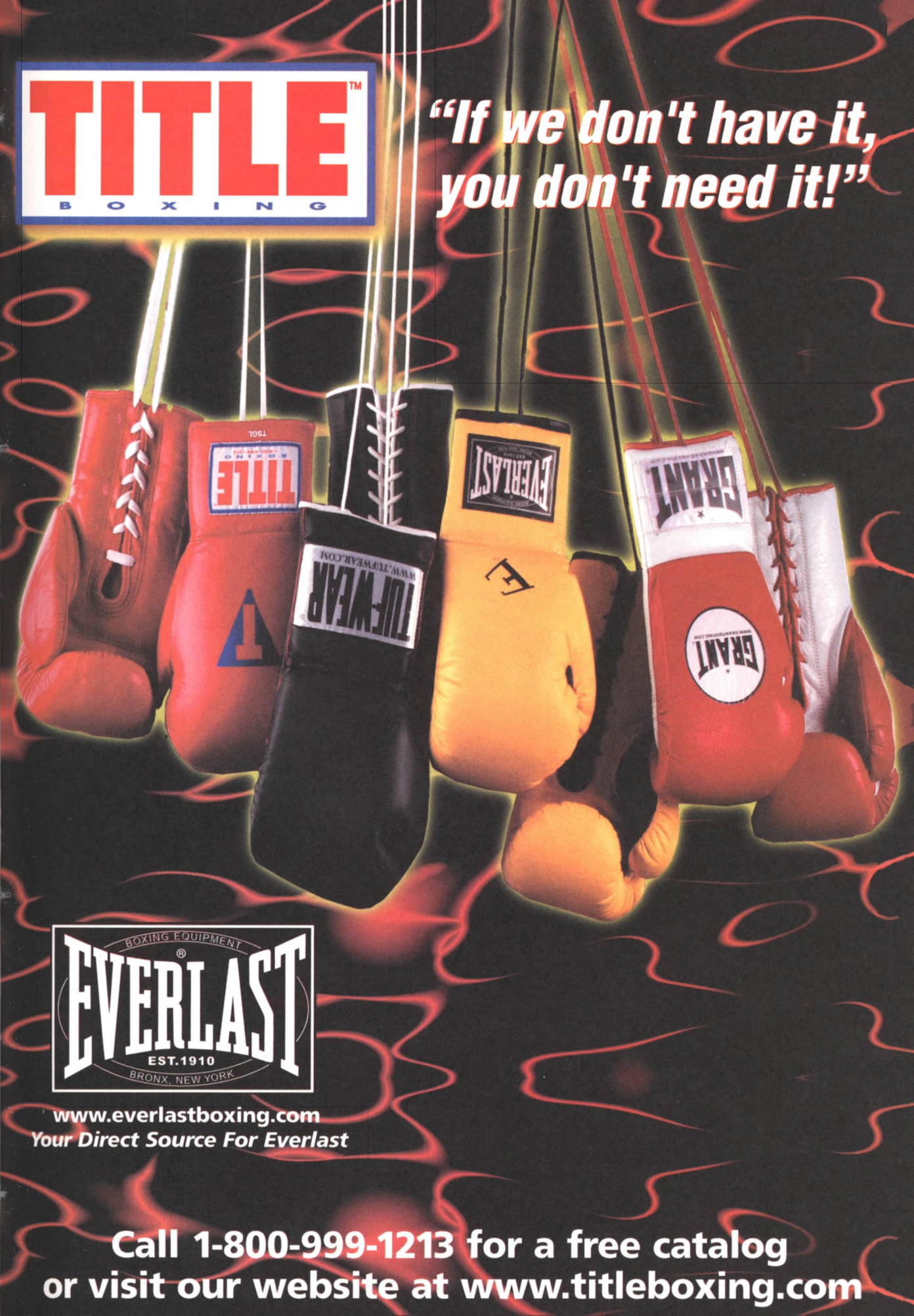
Houston, we have no problem—at least as far as this card is concerned. It should be one of Showtime's most entertaining of the year.

LISTEN UP



Gatti: Back in action on January 24

The November 22 Showtime broadcast will be competing for viewers with a Golden Boy Promotions pay-per-view. The only bout locked up as of press time was a meeting of lightweight contenders **Javier Jauregui** and **Leavander Johnson**, while the main event and other undercard bouts were still being negotiated ... Just before we went to press, the world light heavyweight title bout between **Roy Jones** and **Antonio Tarver** was made official for November 8 on HBO Pay-Per-View. Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas will host ... Former welterweight champion **Vernon Forrest**, who was contemplating retirement immediately following his second loss to **Ricardo Mayorga**, is now talking about fighting again in January or February '04, as a junior middleweight ... HBO has set aside January 24 for **Arturo Gatti's** next fight, but the opponent was still a mystery as of press time. One possibility is unknown Italian **Gianluca Branco**, who is somehow rated number one by the WBC ... Don't be surprised if top junior lightweight **Acelino Freitas** tests the lightweight waters against **Artur Grigorian** in Showtime's first fight card of '04 ... As for Showtime's final fight card of '03, that will be on December 13 in Manchester, England, with **Ricky Hatton** in the main event and **Jeff Lacy** in the co-feature. ■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